REVIEW-CHRONICLE

OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN BELARUS IN 2004

PREAMBLE: CONCLUSIONS AND GENERALIZATIONS

In 2004 the political situation in Belarus was distinguished by further worsening of the situation of human rights and the relations between the state and individuals. Regular and deliberate human rights violations became a necessary condition for the strengthening of the unlimited dictatorial power – infringements of human rights served as the funda¬ment for authoritarianism and were a favorable environment for the development of totalitarianism.

One of the main factors that influenced the public and political situation in Belarus in 2004 was the Parliamentary election and the nationwide referendum concerning the possibility to prolong Aliaksandr Luka¬shenka's presidential powers. The need for the liquidation of the cons¬ti¬tutional restriction of the number of possible presidential terms defined the state policy and influenced it in all circles of public life. This factor ma¬nifested in the sphere of human rights with the aggravation of the rep¬ressions against political opponents and prosecution of opposition-mindedness, enforcement of new discriminative legal acts, further limitation of the freedom of the press, violation of the liberty of peaceful assemblies and associations and other obstacles for the enjoyment of personal liberties by citizens of Belarus.

Citizens of Belarus were deprived of the right to take part in the state government with the assistance of elected representatives. The election to the Chamber of Representatives wasn't free and democratic. It was conducted according to the scenario that was prepared by the authorities in complete conformity with the "wishes" A. Lukashenka expressed: the list of the future members of the Parliament was composed in advance. Lukashenka's adherents were included in the list and the voting didn't change it. The results of the election didn't reflect the will of the electorate, because the very procedure of the electoral campaign and the voting wasn't aimed at revelation of the real will of Belarusians and correspon¬ded neither to the norms of Belarusian legislation, nor to the international standards.

Belarusian authoritarian regime has no democratic frames for its power. It pressurizes not only political and personal civil rights: the defense of the social rights of workers in Belarus has been ruined by making trade-unions a part of the state and the destruction of the social partnership. The official ideology is incompatible with freedom of opinion and press.

The authorities don't abide by their commitment to the UN Interna¬tional Covenant of Civil and Political Rights and pay no attention to the criticism of international human

rights institutions. The critical resolutions on Belarus, adopted by the UN Commission for Human Rights in 2003 and 2004 didn't make the authorities improve the situation, but were officially declared a manifestation of political pressurization of Belarus for its independent policy at international level. Despite the fact that the report about the Covenant execution was to have been presented to the office of the Supreme Commissar on Human Rights in autumn 2001, it still hasn't been done. It is not known even whether it is being prepared or will be prepared in future. Actually, Belarusian authorities try to minimize contacts with international human rights community.

POLITICAL PERSECUTION AND LIMITATIONS OF CIVIL RIGHTS.

In Belarus the present authorities often use the means of criminal and administrative prosecution in the struggle against their political opponents. This is possible due to the absence of independent and fair court and the mechanisms for restoration of the violated rights and legal interests of citizens.

The criminal case against Mikhail Marynich that was brought in 2004 became the most known fact of pressurization of political opponents of the regime. Mikhail Marynich is a well-known public activist of Belarus, former head of Minsk City Executive Committee, former minister of foreign economic relations, former ambassador of Belarus in Latvia, Estonia and Finland, deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the 12th and the 13th convocations. At the time when the criminal case was brought he was the chairman of the public association Dzelavaia Initsyiatyva (Busi¬ness Initiative) and one of the leaders of the public movement Za Hodnaie Zhyttsio (For Worthy Life). According to some experts, the persecution of Marynich is connected to his intention to run for presidency during the presidential election in 2006. Even before the criminal persecution, on 13 April 2004 Mikhail Marynich was fined for the activity on the behalf of the unregistered association Za Hodnaie Zhyttsio (For Worthy Life). The criminal persecution started on 24 April, after the examination of Marynich's car, as a result of which 90 000 US dollars was confiscated. At night of 24-25 April M. Marynich was interrogate concerning the money found in his car and invited for an interrogation to KGB. On 26 April he was arrested and taken to KGB isolator. Soon prosecutor's office sanctioned the searches in the premises that belonged to M. Marynich and his family. The money wasn't returned to M. Marynich, but wasn't mentioned in the documents of the accusation either.

At first the criminal case was brought upon Article 377 of the Criminal Code (theft or damage of documents, seals or rubber-stamps), because during the searches the documents that concerned the previous activity of Mikhail Marynich as a minister and

ambassador were confiscated. Then the investigation brought a criminal case upon Article 295 of the Criminal Code (Illegal operations with firearms, ammunition and explosives". The preliminary accusation to Mikhail Marynich was given on this very article. This was the formal reason to detain him in the KGB isolator since April and till the final court decision that was pronounced on 30 December and didn't find Marynich guilty of violation of this article.

The only accusation to Mikhail Marynich that was upheld by the court was "illegal appropriation" of the computers and organization equipment that were found during the search in the garage of Marynich's son. The computers and other equipment (17 items in total) were lent on free-charge basis to Dzelavaia Initsyiatyva (Business Initiative) association by the US Embassy. The Embassy had no pretensions to Mikhail Marynich, which was confirmed at the trial by the special statement of the State Department of the US. Dzelavaia Initsyiatyva (Business Initiative) didn't pass any property claims either. Despite this, on 30 December the court of Minsk District and the town of Zaslaul, presided by judge Liudmila Dauzhenka found Mikhail Marynich guilty of violation of Article 210 of the Criminal Code (Especially large-scale theft committed with the abuse of the official powers) and sentenced him to five years in jail with property confiscation and prohibition to occupy any official positions for another five years. The manner of the investigation and the court consideration of this case witnessed that the criminal persecution of Mikhail Marynich was a consequence of his public position and political activity. This case is an evident example of the legal lynching of a regime's opponent.

The cases against Valery Lievanieuski and Aliaksandr Vasilieu – well-known activists of Belarusian businessmen's movement – became a warning to those who intended to criticize Lukashenka and his crew. These businessmen from Hrodna were sentenced to two years in jail for "insult of president" on the eve of the declaration of the referendum. The trial and the severe sentenced evidently served as a means of intimidation. V. Lievanieuski and A. Vasilieu organized seVieral large actions and strikes of Belarusian businessmen including the demonstration in Hrodna on 1 May 2004. The criminal cases against them were brought upon part 2 of Article 368 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus – public insult of Lukashenka accompanied with accusations in abuse of power. The formal reason for the cases was the poem "Public utilities bill" that was printed in the fly-sheets with the invitation to the action of 1 May and made fun of the demagogy of some politicians and president's private journeys to Austria for skiing. A. Vasilieu was also charged upon Article 342 of the Criminal Code for the organization of the unauthorized meeting of businessmen on 1 May during which gross violations of public order allegedly took place. On 7 September judge of Hrodna Leninski Borough

Court Dzmitry Dziemchan¬ka found V. Lievanieuski and A. Vasilieu guilty and sentenced them for two years in jail for insult of president (Vasilieu also for the organization of mass riot). The court also ruled to exact for the benefit of the state as the computers and other organization equipment exacted from the prisoners during the preliminary investigation. The formal reason for the confiscation was that the equipment was used as a means with which the crime was committed.

The absence of a fair and independent court system (all judges are appointed by president and can be fired by president as well) makes it possible to use such mechanisms of criminal persecution in the struggle against opponents of the present regime. The threat of criminal persecution, especially upon Articles 367 and 368 of the Criminal Code (libel of president and insult of official) is used against the critics of the existing regime – human rights activists, journalists and opposition politicians.

For instance, in 2004 criminal cases upon the mentioned articles were brought against the politicians Andrei Klimau, Anatol Liabiedzka (leader of the United Civil Party), the journalist Iryna Khalip, Hary Pahaniaila (human rights activist, vice-chair of Belarusian Helsinki Committee), the public activist Aksana Novikava, etc. In all these cases criminal persecution is used for intimidation – during the investigation the suspects and the accused were to come to procurator's offices or KGB for interrogations, they also faced the danger of searches at their premises and arrests. We should also mention that accusations in libel of president and the present authorities were actively used against candidates to the Parliament as a reason to exclude them from the electoral race (such candidates as Maryna Bahdanovich, Alieh Volchak and Aliaksandr Tsynkievich, for instance). The persecution concerned also other participants of the electoral campaigns – members of the initiative groups that nominated opposition candidates, candidates' proxies, observers and journalists.

A separate aspect of the Parliamentary election in Belarus was the struggle for improvement of the electoral legislation and release of political prisoners, which manifested in the hunger-strike of three deputies of the Chamber of Representatives in which other public activists from all Belarus became involved (the total number of the hunger-strikers was about 20 persons).

Political repression wasn't used only against political opponents of the existing political regime. Human rights organizations and activists felt strong pressure as well. In 2004 the criminal cases against Tatsiana Protska, chair of Belarusian Helsinki Committee the committee's accoun¬tant Tatsiana Rudkievich were brought for alleged non-payment of taxes from the foreign financial aid, provided by the EU. This aid was received in

conformity with all demands of Belarusian legislation. Later, after a long investigation, these cases were stopped. Such pressurization or lawless arrests were especially often used in connection with distri¬bution of information (for instance, the human rights activists Tatsiana Reviaka and Hary Pahaniaila were detained for distribution of the official resolution of the Council of Europe concerning the missing persons in Belarus).

Iury Bandazheuski, scientist from Homiel who was confessed a prisoner of conscience, is still kept in jail.

Arrests, violence, and truncheons are used against participants of peaceful demonstrations. The greatest number of peaceful demonst¬rators was detained during the actions of 1 May in Hrodna, 25 March in Minsk and 21 July in Minsk. The organizers of Chernobyl Way action that took place on 26 April were punished. On the eve of the election participants of the pre-electoral campaigns of opposition candidates, the candidates and the researches who conducted exit-poll were detained by the police all over the country. The police violence was especially evident during the peaceful actions of protest against the falsifications of the results of the election and the referendum. These actions took place in the end of October. For instance, the head of the riot squad police of Minsk Padabied and his subordinates tortured Anatol Lia¬biedzka, chair of United Civil Party. The persons who beat the politician remain unpunished. On the contrary, Belarusian courts regularly fine and imprison participants of meetings and demonstrations. Trials on such cases are often a pure formality. In 2004 Human Rights Center Viasna conducted the monitoring of the execution of the right to fair trial during consideration of administrative cases. The results of the monitoring show that during consideration of administrative cases judges don't execute even fundamental demands of the process law.

On the eve of the revote of the second round of the presidential election in the Ukraine the police groundlessly detained in Minsk seVieral dozens of Belarusian citizens who were going to the Ukraine as international observers. Among the detainees there were many members of HRC Viasna.

At the same time in Belarus there are adopted non-constitutional laws that permit human rights violations and infringement of the immunity of private premises and private life to the police and secret services. The amendments to the law about the state security organs that were adopted in the first reading considerably increase the powers of secret services concerning violation of the secret of private life, allow to bug private telephone talks and get into private premises even without the prosecutor's sanction and also introduce punishment for revealing divulgation of secret informants that are

directed by secret services to public organizations, political parties, state institutions and other organizations. On Lukashenka's personal order presidential security service joined the struggle against political opponents, though its powers aren't confirmed by any laws.

So, 2004 was distinguished by the increasing pressurization of the persons who openly express their disagreement with the official ideology and criticize the policy of Aliaksandr Lukashenka. The persons who stated their intentions to run at the presidential election in 2006 are pressurized worst of all. Not only are well-known activists and leaders of civil movements pressurized – more and more often the authorities are threatening ordinary citizens who have their own point of view. The expansion of totalitarian ideology in Belarus can put an end to the existence of legal opposition to Aliaksandr Lukashenka, the fundament of the ideology being the cult of the person of the incumbent president.

LIMITATION OF FREEDOM OF PRESS.

The struggle against the liberty of press and the liquidation of alternative sources of information has always been a priority direction of the state policy of the present regime. In the very beginning of his presidency Lukashenka started a war against independent press which is still going on. The result of this ten-year war became the appearance of closed society in Belarus that is oriented on state control of information and the monopoly of state mass media and propaganda.

The legislation of Belarus is very unfavorable to mass media. The procedure of registration of mass media lets the authorities prevent the establishment of undesirable sources of alternative information. The existing order of agreement of the legal addresses of editorial board with local administrations allows unmotivated refusals to every new edition. In 2004 the local authorities refused to provide legal addresses to the editorial board of such editions as Afisha (Billboard) newspaper from Smarhon, Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni (New Newspaper of Smarhon), Sobstvennyi Kommentariy (Own Commentary) and Volny Horad (Free Town) from Krychau. Despite of the legal guarantees to journalist activity, journalists are in fact unprotected from administrative pressurization and persecution by the authorities.

The legislation is unfavorable and equivocal. In addition, it is often interpreted differently and used as a means of censorship and liquidation of undesirable mass media. In 2004 such newspapers as Volnaie Hlybokaie (Free Hlybokaie) and Vitsiebski Kurjier (Vitsiebsk Courier) were issued with blank spaces. The editors of Mestnaya Gazeta (Local Newspaper) from Vaukavysk faced with censorship at printing houses – the typographies of Minsk, Baranavichy and Slonim refused to print the newspaper. The existing order for

distribution of editions from foreign countries in Belarus allows controlling this segment of the market: at present all legal entities and private entrepreneurs who deal with distribution of foreign mass media have to agree the catalogue of the distributed publications with the Ministry of Information and present to it a copy of every publication they distribute, which is a mechanism of preliminary censorship of foreign publications.

The speeches of opposition politicians on the state TV and radio were constantly censored as well as the texts of their pre-electoral fly-sheets. During the election state printing houses purposefully censored the materials that were ordered for printing by opposition candidates.

The election and the referendum that were conducted in 2004 had a negative impact on the situation of press. Temporary suspension of the issue was applied to such newspapers as Vremya (Time), Navinki (wordplay – the first meaning of the word is novelties, the first being the name of a psychiatric clinic), Predprinimatelskaya Gazeta (Business-men's Newspaper), Zgoda (Chime), Rabochaia Salidarnasts (Workers' Solidarity), Vecherniy Stolin (Evening Stolin), Motor-Stars Review, Kriminalnoye Obozreniye (Criminal Review), Liuboy Kapriz (Any Caprice), Allo! Kupliu, prodam, meniayu (Hullo! I'll buy, sell, exchange), Versiya (Version), Detektivnaya Gazeta (Detective newspaper). News¬papers are often suspended with gross law violations (the cases of Vremya and Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni). The week before the election the authorities suspended 12 more editions, which had a great influence on the informational space of Belarus on the eve of the election, especially in the country's regions. Among the suspended newspapers there were Molodiozhnyi Prospekt (Youth Prospect), Nedelya (Week), Rehianal¬naya Hazeta (Regional Newspaper), Regionalnyie Vedomosti (Regional news), Narodnyi Predprinimatel (Popular Businessman), etc.

There are obstacles to distribution of independent press. During the election distributors of independent press were detained seVieral hundred times. In 2004 distribution of printed editions by subscription became a licensed kind of activity in Belarus. As a result this activity is now cont¬rolled by the state monopolist – Bielposhta (Belarusian post). This inno¬vation became a serious obstacle for the establishment of the alternative nets for distribution of non-state press. At present even the editorial boards of the newspapers can't distribute them by subscription. It was a hard blow on independent press, because the state delivery net often groundlessly refuses to distribute the newspapers. As a result of such refusal Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta (Belarusian Commercial News¬paper) lost its leadership on the state market. The state enterprises refuse to accept for retail such popular independent newspapers as

Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta, Belorusskiy Rynok (Belarusian Market), Belorusskaya Hazieta (Belarusian Newspaper), etc. The retail department of Belsayuzdruk (Belarusian Union Press) in Minsk issued special instruction for the vendors who work at the news-stands. According to the instructions, the vendors must "put newspapers in the first row of the showcase in the following order: Zviazda (Star), Res¬publika, So¬vetskaya Belorussiya, Narodnaia Gazeta (People's Newspa¬per), Kultura, Litaratura I Mastatstva (Literature And Art), Belorusskaya Niva (Bela¬rusian Cornfield), Holas Radzimy (Voice of Homieland), The Minsk Times, Znamia Yunosti (Flag of Youth), Zorka (Dawn), Perekhodnyi Vozrast (Awkward Age), Ranitsa (Morning), Siamia (Family), Sportivnaya Panorama (Sportive Panorama). These newspapers are state ones, loyal to the present authorities. So, even the publications that are accepted for retail don't appear at the showcases.

At the same time, workers of state enterprises and institutions are forced to subscribe to state publications: president Lukashenka decided to increase the circulation of the main state newspaper Sovetskaya Belorussiya to 500 000 copies, which demands forcible subscription to this newspaper. Other state propagandist newspapers, including the publications of regional and district executive committees, are distributed in the same way. For instance, on 15 March the district executive com-mittee of Hlybokaie distributed the order to the heads of local enterprises to subscribe the enterprises and subscribe personally to the state newspapers. The order also included the number of copies to which it was necessary to subscribe. This practice is widespread in Belarus.

Warnings to newspapers for publication of critical materials are a means of blackmailing the publications which have to change their editorial policy for the fear of being closed down. When ARCHE magazine issued the number that was devoted to the tenth anniversary of Lukashenka's rule and contained seVieral critical articles (for instance, concerning the distribution of the ideology of lukashism in Belarus) the state bookstores (the largest part of the market) and news-stands refused to sell it. The founders of the magazine received two warnings, as a result of which the magazine can be liquidated. In January 2004 the national procurator's office ordered to detain at post the circulation of Asamblieia magazine that was sent in sealed envelopes by the private individuals who were its editors. The print-runs of Den (Day), Vremya and Nedelya newspapers were often confiscated, especially during the pre-electoral campaign.

All TV channels are controlled by the state authorities and the news and play-lists of the few private and public radio stations are constantly censored. Some of the musicians, for instance those who took part in concerts in support of opposition, are deprived of ether.

The monitoring of violations of the rights of mass media witnesses that the right to access to information is violated all over Belarus. Article 34 of the Constitution guarantees to citizens the right to receive complete, precise and timely information about the activity of state organs, political, economical and cultural life. Nevertheless, the right of journalists to receive information is constantly violated. The correspondent of Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni Iryna Luhina wasn't informed about the date of the opening of the new register office in Smarhon (Hrodna region). It wasn't allowed to her to make a photo of its interiors either. However, most often this right is violated during elucidation of the events of public and political life, scandalous or politically motivated trials. On 22 June the security didn't let in the House of the Parliament Iury Svirko though he was accredited there. The journalist Iryna Makavietskaia often faced with obstacles during elucidation of open trials and even was administr¬ative punished for attempt to get to an open trial. On 28 January the guard of Hrodna Leninski Borough Court didn't let in Siarhiei Astrautsou, journalist of Radio Liberty, and Iury Taparashau, expert of Belarusian Association of Journalists.

One of the effective means to limit access to information is refusal or deprival of accreditation. Such practice is applied both to Belarusian and foreign mass media. On 30 July the Ministry of Foreign Affairs deprived of accreditation four members of Belarusian correspondent station of the Russian TV channel Russia. The reason for such decision was the report about the street action of opposition, devoted to the tenth anniversary of the presidency of Aliaksandr Lukashenka. The authorities also deported from Belarus the representatives of French TV channel for the attempt to elucidate the activity of the youth organization ZUBR. Mikhail Podoliak, leading analyst of Vremya newspaper, was deported as well.

In 2004 seVieral cases of beating of journalists were registered. Among the beaten: workers of the Russian TV companies Ren-TV and NTV, journalist Paviel Sharamiet. During mass actions of the opposition journalists were detained and beaten together with participants of the actions – during the street action in Navapolatsk, devoted to anniversary of the disappearance Iury Zakharanka (former minister of internal affairs) Vintsent Mudrou, correspondent of Radio Liberty, was detained. Iryna Makavietskaia, journalist of Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta, received death threats on the telephone in connection with her articles.

Journalists are often invited for talks to KGB and procurator's offices. In the cases when journalists revealed facts of falsification of the parliamentary election and the

referendum, the authorities persecuted them for libel instead of conducting check-ups on the facts mentioned.

Besides, civil legislation gives a good opportunity to file groundless suits for defamation, which, together with the dependence of the courts and unfair trials is a good weapon the officials can use in the struggle against the critical articles that appear in press. In 2004 trials with the participation or against mass media became regular. One of the evident examples when the defamation suit was used to liquidate a newspaper was the suit, filed by the former chair of Belarusian State TV and Radio Company Iahor Rybakou concerning the article "Eleonora Yezerskaya: I Guarantee Five Poods of Love" in Narodnaia Volia (People's Will). Ia. Rybakou stated that the information of the article didn't meet the reality and insulted his honor, dignity and business reputation. The court of the first instance decided the case in his favor. When the defendants complained against this decision to the College Board of Minsk City Court, the sum of the sum of the compensation the newspaper was to pay to Rybakou was even increased. The peculiarity of the situation is that at the moment of when the court verdict was pronounced, Ia. Ry¬bakou was kept in jail on accusation of corruption as the chair of Bela¬rusian State TV and Radio Company. The court also exacted from the newspaper 15 million rubles for the benefit of the businessman Siarhiei Atroshchanka. Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta had to pay 3 million rubles to the actor Iauhien Kryzhanouski. Svobodnye Novosti (Free News) weekly was sentenced to pay more than 3 million rubles to a former policeman.

At the same time the state mass media aren't punished for libel. The state TV demonstrated the serial Daroha Nikudy (Road Nowhere). The names of its authors remain unknown. The attempts to find the authors with the means of the court were fruitless. The attempt of Tatsiana Protska, chair of Belarusian Helsinki Committee, to get the journalist Iury Prakopau disprove libeling information against her and also get him punished for violation of the secret of private life didn't give any results either. On the Election Day the state mass media consciously illegally distributed agitation, including the doubtless information of pro-governmental exit-poll. BelTA state information agency, the Sovetskaya Belorussiya newspaper and other state editions with impunity violated the Electoral Code of Belarus by publishing agitation on behalf of foreign citizens.

The Belarusian regime has repeatedly demonstrated its intention to control the distribution of information through Internet. It tries to limit access to undesirable Internet resources from Belarus and pressurizes the journalists who put information to foreign web sites. A number of representatives of opposition political parties were warned as a result of publications on the Internet.

On the Election Day some independent informational web sites were blocked, including the site of Human Rights Center Viasna. It could be done only by Beltelecom – the monopolist to internet access in Belarus, national operator of electronic communications. Hackers attacked the site of Charter'97 seVieral times.

The new law on mass media, that contains new limitations to freedom of press, hasn't been adopted yet. However, its discussion at the parliament takes place without taking into consideration the opinion of journalists and public circles. The existing draft law provides obligatory registration of web-sites. This norm will give the authorities the possibility to legally persecute creators of undesirable sites.

LIMITATION OF FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION.

In 2004 the situation with freedom of association in Belarus didn't improve. The legal conditions for establishment and activity of independent associations of citizens remained unfavorable. In certain respects the legislation and the practice of its usage demonstrated the tendency for further limitation of the freedom of association.

Belarusian legislation on NGOs is one of the strictest in comparison with the laws of Europe and CIS. The Civil Code provides seVieral frames for non-commercial organizations – public association, religious asso¬ciation, fund, institution, association and union. The main form of NGO, grounded on membership, is public association. The law "On public associations" that was adopted in 1994 and since then amended many times regulates the existence and the activity of public associations. However, the establishment of such associations is regulated by presidential decrees and the registration rules introduced by the Ministry of Justice. All these documents considerably change the norms of the law.

Among the main limitations for the establishment of NGOs is a large fee (more than $220 for national public associations and about $100 for local public associations) and the demand to have legal address on administrative premises – it is hard to execute this demand in the conditions of total state control. Provision of a legal address (which means the creation or legal existence of NGO) often depends on the will of the state officials – in the regions it is necessary to receive the agreement of the state officials for establishment of a public association or other NGO. The necessity of legal address is also used in struggle against regional structures of opposition parties: actually, the state can revoke its agreement for placement of the organization and liquidate its legal address, as a result of which the unit ceases to exist legally. In 2004 about 30 regional branches of political parties were deprived of legal addresses. The party that has no registered

organizational structures in a city or a district doesn't have the right to take part in the election there. In case a party has no structures in the majority of the six regions of Be¬larus, it can be liquidated. In October and November 2004 the authorities started the large-scale campaign on re-registration of legal addresses (the deadline being 1 February 2005). As a result of such re-registration a number of public associations and the majority of local branches (city and district structures) of political parties and public associations can cease to exist.

At present in Belarus public associations pay for the rented premises on a facility tariff, but the abolishment of this facility is actively discussed. As a result the rent can suddenly increase and NGOs won't be able to pay the rent.

The documents that are submitted for registration of public asso¬ciations undergo double expertise: by the registering body (the Ministry of Justice for national ones and the justice board for local public associa¬tions) and political expertise by the Commission on registration and non-registration. This commission has no legal status and was established by presidential decree. It consists of the chairs of the main organs of the law machinery (KGB, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, etc.) and is controlled by the presidential administration. The conclusion given by the committee is grounded on no laws, is closed and non-motivated and often serves for refusals to register public asso¬ciations. As a result of the existence of such system of registration the state registration of a public association is possible only if the latter demonstrates its loyalty to the present authorities or in the case they are interested in the establishment of such organization. Only about 6% of the applications for registration of public associations are satisfied. According to the official information, in 2003 1464 such applications were filed. Only 10 applications for the establishment of national public associations, 23 – international, 12 – regional, 49 – regional, city, etc. public associations were satisfied. In 2004 the proportions remained the same and the order of registration didn't changed. In January-September of 2004 only 60 public associations were registered. The one-month term for registration that is provided by the law is executed in rare cases, often this process is delayed for years.

Complaints to court against lawless or groundless non-registration of public associations give no results – courts never take the side of public associations. During consideration of such cases the courts aren't guided by the law, that determines the sufficient grounds for non-registration of organizations, but refer to sub-legislative acts and non-constitutional conclusions of the above mentioned commission. For instance, in 2004 the court groundlessly ruled that the public association Civil Alternative couldn't be

registered because some paragraphs of its statute violated the law, whereas the statutes of some existing pro-governmental NGOs had the same provisions in their statutes.

In the field of inter-sector interaction public associations are almost deprived of the possibility to cooperate with state organs: the Belarusian state is oriented on corporate cooperation model with civil society, when only separate public associations (most often those controlled or inspired by the state) are chosen for cooperation. On the local level the situation is the same.

Public associations play inconsiderable role in the field of legal initiative: their attempts to get laws changed in accordance with their interests give no result. Even the discussion of the draft law on public associations in 2004 took place without taking into consideration the opinion of public associations. Every lawmaking activity of public associations is treated by the authorities as subversion of the state if the contrary is not proved.

Belarusian public associations face considerable difficulties in their activity because of unfavorable legislation. It is manifested in the discriminative taxation practice, the chances to receive state subsidies, rent premises and purchase property.

Limitation of human rights activity of NGOs is registered in legislation: for instance, according to the law, public associations can defend at trials only interests of their members. The rule that requires receiving licenses for editorial activity and other services also hinders the activity of public associations. Inequality in the attitude of the state towards NGOs is clearly observed: BRSM (Belarusian National Youth Union) and other pro-governmental pubic organizations receive considerable state subsidies and other support from the budget, whereas other NGOs are deprived of such support. The pseudo-NGOs that were established by the state can also use the administrative resource: for instance, forcible inclusion into BRSM and the state pioneer organization is widespread.

One of the important factors is that one of the Presidential decrees prohibits the activity of unregistered public associations. The administ¬rative punishment for it is a fine or up to 15r days in jail. It was applied to the activists of the NGOs that were liquidated or weren't registered. In 2004 more than 20 persons were punished for the activity on behalf of unregistered organizations. The majority of them were representatives of People's coalition 5+, ZUBR, Charter'97, the public association Za Hodnaie Zhyttsio (For Better Life). Activists of unregis¬tered NGOs were threatened with such punishment – in 2004 it con¬cerned the Assembly of Pro-democratic NGOs of

Belarus, Human Rights Center Viasna and Belarusian Student Association. At present the Parlia¬ment discus¬ses the draft law, according to which one can be criminally punished for the activity on behalf of unregistered or liquidated public associations – it can make the public situation in Belarus yet more complicated.

The state organs also hinder the distribution of information about the activity of NGOs. Not only is it prohibited to cover the activity of unregis¬tered NGOs – the majority of the state mass media don't give any infor¬mation about the activity of the organizations and movements that aren't controlled by the state.

Public associations have no facilities in the field of business activity – their economic activity is regulated by the general civil and tax laws. The situation is worsened by the absence of the legislation about social order, as a result of which public associations don't sell their services to the population and don't act as rivals at the market. The taxation of public associations and their profits also conforms to the general practice, applied to all economy subjects. The law provides the possibility to accept private donations, but there are no legal facilities for it – only a small number of those who donate means to sportive organizations are exempt from taxes. Actually, NGOs don't pay any taxes from the received means, but the donors have to pay them. The check-ups of public associations that are conducted by the registering organs and tax audits are an important means of control – any check-up can lead to sanctions and any financial activity and receiving means from abroad can be considered as violations.

Presidential decree #24 of 2003 strengthened the control of the financing of NGOs from foreign sources. It is still necessary to obtain the permission of Presidential Administration for the use of a foreign grant. The administration also considers the program of the project implementation. In the case it doesn't approve it, it will be impossible to use the means. The decree also increased the punishment for the violation of the order for the use of grants. Foreign citizens who give such aid to NGOs can be deported. In 2003 and 2004 seVieral citizens of Germany and Great Britain were deported for cooperation with NGOs. Representatives of a number of foreign funds were denied the right to visit Belarus, even in the case they had visa.

Belarusian Helsinki Committee and Volia Da Razvittsia (Will for Development) faced financial claims from the state in the volume of seVieral thousand US dollars for the use of the financial means upon TACIS programs that had been approved by the state earlier. Criminal cases were brought against the heads of these organizations Tatsiana Protska and Mikhail Varaniets. Later the court justified them and set the lawless tax sanctions aside.

Liquidation and legal persecution of NGOs are of lawless, punitive nature – even the slightest violation can be presented as a grave one and become a reason for liquidation. NGOs are defenseless to police searches and the check-ups that are conducted by justice organs. During the electoral and the referendum campaigns that took place in summer and autumn 2004 the offices of a number of NGOs and the headquarters of the initiative groups of independent candidates suffered from illegal searches and other actions of the police or secret services. Searches were conducted at the offices of Independent Institute for Socio-Econo¬mic and Political Studies (IISEPS) in Minsk, the office of Hramadzianskia Initsyiatyvy (Civil Initiatives) in Homiel, the office of Dziedzich in Brest, the offices of Belarusian Language Society, Belarusian School Society and Fond Lva Sapiehi (Leu Sapieha Fundation) in Hrodna, the office of Young Front in Zhodzina and Human Rights Center Viasna in Brest.

After the election the building in Maladechna, where the offices of Human Rights Center Viasna and Belarusian Helsinki Committee were situated, was robbed. Unknown persons attempted to burst into the offices of United Civil Party. Such housebreakings aren't investiga¬ted properly.

In general, the present legal environment for the activity of NGOs is unfavorable and aimed at pressurization of the organizations that are independent from state organs. The legislation and the practice of its use favor only state public associations.

A separate aspect of the relations between NGOs and the state organs is the wave of trials on liquidation of the most famous and active human rights, youth and social NGOs. In its Ruling #31 of 23 October 2003 the College Board of the Ministry of Justice stated that the campaign on liquidation of public associations started on oral order of president of the Republic of Belarus: the Ministry of Justice and the justice boards of regional executive committees and Minsk City Executive Committee conducted the emergency check-ups and liquidation of public associations to implement it. As a result of the action that was called "clear-up" seViearal dozens of public associations were liquidated and hundreds of them were warned. Simultaneously, obstacles were created to registration of new organizations.

These orders were implemented directly by the organs of justice – the Ministry of Justice with its regional justice boards and the minister Viktar Halavanau at the head. A great role was played by regional courts and the Supreme Court according to the verdicts of which the public associations were liquidated and new ones weren't registered. The process of the "clear-up" was controlled by Presidential Administration and the ideological vertical. As a result no organizations managed to defend their right to

existence at court. As a result of a new explanation of Article #57 of the Civil Code the courts received the right to liquidate public associations for repeated or gross law violations. According to the order for the liquidation of public associations that is described in the law “On public associations” an organization could be liquidated only in the case it received two warnings for the same violation during a year. However, the courts ignored this norm.

In 2004 as a result of trials the youth organizations Maladaia Hra¬mada (Young Society), Belarusian Association of Young Politicians, New Group, the human rights organizations Independent Society of Legal Research (ISLR), the scientific research organizations Interna¬tional Institute of Political Research, Belarusian Engineer Techno¬logic Academy, the women’s organization Initiative, etc. were liquidated. In 2004 38 public associations ceased to exist. The majority of the liquidated organizations continued their activity despite of the deprival of the legal status, but couldn’t direct observers to elections and enjoy other rights that were related to state registration. Instead of the liquidated ones the authorities establish so-called “state NGOs” and other NGOs that are controlled by the state and are established with the aim of creating the illusion of civil society.

In 2004 the Ministry of Justice applied to parties the techniques initially used towards public associations. For instance, the Supreme Court liquidated Belarusian Labor Party on the suit of the Justice Ministry that accused the party in having wrong legal address and irregularity of assemblies. The parties that joined People’s coalition 5+ received warnings for the establishment of unregistered association of political parties.

The adoption of the amended laws “On public associations” and “On political parties” can make the environment for the existence and activity of public associations and political parties even worse. The draft of the law “On public associations” widens the control powers of the registering organs and introduces the obligatory yearly reporting to them about the activity. The draft law “On political parties” increases the number of persons necessary for registration of a party.

Religious communities suffer as a result of the non-democratic and discriminative legislation. Non-traditional denominations and religious communities are insulted not only by the state mass media, but even in schoolbooks. As a result of the campaign on re-registration of religious organizations dozens of religious organizations and units ceased to exist in 2004.

LIMITATION OF EDUCATIONAL LIBERTIES AND WORKING RIGHTS.

The authorities try to eradicate the sources of opposition thought in state and non-state educational establishments by introduction of compulsory ideological subjects (such as “The fundamentals of the state ideology”) and liquidation of disloyal educational establishments. The academic liberties of higher educational establishments are extremely limited.

In 2004 the authorities closed down European Humanities Univer¬sity, where the modern European education standards were applied. In spring 2004 the university had problems with receiving the license for educational activity. Then the rental agreement was cancelled. As a result the university lost its premises and couldn’t continue the educa¬tional process. Soon its license was liquidated, as a result of which it cea¬sed to exist at all.

President Lukashenka pointed out that the real reason for the liqui¬dation of the university was the distribution of European values and the preparation of the elite that could replace the ruling nomenclature in future.

International Humanities Institute was the other establishment that was closed in 2004. Jewish organizations considered the liquidation of the institute (that prepared specialists in Jewish culture in the department of Jewish studies) as national discrimination.

Iakub Kolas National Humanities Lyceum that was liquidated in 2003 continued its activity underground. Despite persecution of the lyceum pupils and their parents, new students were accepted and the lessons continued.

In 2004 the practice of considerable worsening of the conditions for work continued. The most important violation of the working rights became the forcible and almost total transfer of employees of state enterprises and institutions to the contract form of employment. The practice of the usage of Decree #29 “On additional measures to improve the working relations and strengthen the working and executive discipline” witnesses that employers often ignore the demands of the law when transferring employees to the new form of employment. The worst thing in this situation is that after conclusion of contracts people become defenseless and dependent on the administration of the enterprise that can cancel the contract at any time, whereas employees can’t retire on their own free will. The contract system is convenient for controlling society –

the place of work becomes a place of political control (the threat of dismissal was often used towards democratic activists during the election and the referendum conducted in 2004).

The state totally controls the working market – the majority of enter¬prises are either owned by the state completely, or partially (through the so-called “golden share”). As a result, the state has the direct influence on the decisions of the employers. The control of the working relations has become an important instrument of pressurization of civil liberties and a means of control of public life by the state.

Trade unions have been turned into an organ of state power, all actions of which are coordinated with the administrations of enterprises. The pressurization of the few independent trade unions is the main direction of the state policy in the working field. The development of totalitarianism in the country doesn’t allow establishment of the system of social partnership in the country. People are often violently punished for the strikes that have already become the only means of struggling for the execution of the workers’ rights,

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Regular and gross violations of public and political, social, economic and cultural rights of citizens of Belarus are an important element of the authoritarian regime and the totalitarian ideology that exist in Belarus. Violations of rights and absence of defense mechanisms, hard pressurization of native and foreign human rights initiatives allow preserving and strengthening the regime of one-man rule in Belarus. So, the reasons of the unsatisfactory situation of human rights in Belarus lie in the political field and are a conscious element of the state policy. The situation of human rights in Belarus can be improved only in case the question of the political power in the country is solved. The improvement of the execution of human rights and the appearance of guarantees of their rehabilitation is possible only in the case the authoritarian dictatorship in the country disappears.

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In the beginning of the year the study of the ideology course was included into the retraining programs for the unemployed. The intro¬duction of this “highly important” subject makes the course of studies at least half a month longer. Students and trainers are indignant at the fact, but have to study the subject.

1 January – Valiery Shchukin, deputy of the Supreme Soviet, had to celebrate the New Year at the railway station in Polatsk. It was his 111th night at the railway station, because on 1 August 2003 he was evic¬ted from the hostel in Polatsk, where he used to live for many years. The politician started to live at the railway station to protest against it. At first the administration put obstacles to Shchukin and often accused him of disorderly conduct, but then got used to him and didn’t disturb him when he slept on a bench. Valiery Shchukin has seven grandchildren and, naturally, could meet the New Year together with the family. However, it is his principled position to spend nights at the railway station.

On ***5 January*** Belaaziorsk police launched proceedings in an assault and battery case. On 2 January two local members of Narodnaia Hra¬mada party, Iauhien and Natallia Akaronka were beaten up by stran¬gers. The incident resulted in Iauhien Akaronka, leader of the local social democrats, getting into hospital with broken ribs and nose. His wife Natallia had trivial bodily injuries. Natallia is a member of Belaaziorsk city soviet. She belongs to democratic group Initiative. Natallia Akaronka says actions of police officers right after the incident was reported made her doubt the objectivity of the investigation. Soon after the incident the police detained one of the assailants. However, soon they let him go.

On ***5 January*** Raman Kazakievich and Daryia Maldavanava were detained near Tsentralny supermarket for distribution of cards with seasonal greetings from the European coalition Free Belarus. The de¬tained were taken to Tsentralny Borough Board of Internal Affairs. The police drew up reports of violation of Article #143 of the Code of Admi¬nistrative Offences (violation of the rules of town planning and organi¬zation of public services).

On ***9 January*** Belarusian Independent trade union resumed publi-shing its weekly the Salidarnasts. The last issue of the newspaper ca¬me out on 12 December 2003. On 17 December Svietach printing press, based in Minsk, informed the editors it would not print the news-paper because of the overload. Now the newspaper is printed by a company in Smolensk, Russia.

On ***11 January*** Homiel journalist Iryna Makavietskaia, known for her articles in Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta, encountered telephone threats. An unknown person phoned to her during an hour, demanding to stop her journalistic activity and threatening to "bury" her otherwise. Iryna taped one of the calls. On 11 January she applied to the police in or¬der to find the anonymous.

On ***12 January*** Frantsysk Skaryna Belarusian Language Society re¬cei¬ved notification of municipal services about leasing contract termi¬nation. The BLS occupied an office at Rumiantsau Str., 13. Partyzanski borough Housing and municipal service demands the BLS to leave the building in two months. The official ground for such actions is the lack of premises for municipal services of the borough. Alieh Trusau, the chair of the Bela¬rusian Language Society, connects these events with activities of the organization. He believes, lack of premises is just a pretext for pressure. "There were attempts to close us a year ago, when we received two official warnings from the Justice Ministry. Now the Belarusian Language Society is pressed according to the scheme of the Belarusian Lyceum – first ousting from the building and closure afterwards", says Alieh Trusau. By the way, two newspapers and four organizations are registered on the BLS address. That's why the ousting will trouble not only BLS.

On ***14 January*** Iakau Hutman, head of the World Association of Belarusian Jews, came to the building of the President's administration with a poster, urging President Lukashenka «To Stop Demolition of Jewish sanctuaries, cemeteries, and monuments to Holocaust victims in Belarus». The moment Mr. Hutman tried to unfold the poster he was detained by police and taken to Minsk city police station. The police kept him there for seVieral hours, drew up a report for unauthorized picketing, and took him to court. Leninski Borough Court judge Aliena Tsierashkova issued an official warning to him.

On ***14 January*** during an informal talk at Homiel Chyhunachny Borough Board of Internal Affairs the journalist of Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta Iryna Makavietskaia was informed that it would be impossible to bring a criminal case on the fact of the death threats. The reason is that the Criminal Code contains no articles that would give punishment for telephone threats and a case can be brought only in the case threat is manifested in some actions.

On ***14 January***, at a press conference on the 2003 work of the Mi¬nistry, Minister of Internal Affairs Uladzimir Navumau claimed he didn't know why PACE reporter Christos Pourgourides had concluded the top Belarusian officials were connected to political disappearances in Belarus. Uladzimir Navumau said: «He asked me questions, and I

ans¬wered them. It is difficult to guess why he came to such a conclusion». Ac¬cording to Uladzimir Navumau said, his conversation with Mr. Pour¬gourides lasted for almost 1.5 hours. However, Navumau refused to say what they were talking about, referring to the agreement with Pourgou¬rides: «It was his request: not to disclose our conversation before he meets everybody and makes his conclusions», mentioned Minister Na¬vumau today. Christos Pourgourides has already published his memoran¬dum about political disappearances in Belarus and made his conclusions. In particular, he reported Uladzimir Navumau had not recognized right away authenticity of General Lapatsik's report, claiming Viktar Sheiman was one of the suspects. Only when Mr. Pourgourides suggested a graphology expert examination should be made, Navumau claimed Lapatsik's report was authentic. According to Mr. Pourgourides, then Uladzimir Navumau claimed the version in General Lapatsik's report was a mistake. Uladzimir Navumau is also mentioned in Mr. Pourgou¬rides's report in conjunction with SOBR commander Paulichenka, suspected of organizing abduction and killing of Zakharanka, Hanchar, and Krasouski. Today journalists asked Minister Navumau why he had done nothing to convince Paulichenka to meet with Mr. Pourgourides. Uladzimir Navumau took all the responsibility: «As far as Lieutenant Colonel Paulichenka is concerned, I believe, as a Minister of Internal Affairs I answered all questions to me and my subordinates, because I am responsible for them as well».

On ***15 January*** Iakau Hutman went on hunger-strike of protest against the manifestations of the state anti-Semitism in Belarus.

On ***15 January*** it was the 14th anniversary of the establishment of Iakub Kolas Belarusian National Humanities Lyceum. Pupils continue learning there despite all obstacles of the state organs. On that day they came to Kastrynichnitskaia Square of Minsk to celebrate the anniversary and tell the authorities: "We have been, we are and we will be!"

On ***15 January*** two suits on protection of honor, dignity, business reputation and compensation of the moral harm were filed with Minsk Leninski Borough Court by the TAA Alliance-media (founder of the Oboz¬revatel newspaper) and businessman Siarhiei Atroshchanka (the publi¬cation's senior editor). Each plaintiff demands from the newspaper to pay moral damages worth 50 million rubles. The suits are grounded on the article "Sergey Otroshchenko's Obozrevatel: Bandit Treatment of Leonid Levin", Narodnaia Volia newspaper published on 3 September 2003. The author of the article analyzed the conflict between the editorial board of Obozrevatel and the head of the Union of Jewish organizations and communities Lieanid Levin. The conflict evolved from

the article by Obozrevatel. Are deputies Kastsian, Navasiad and Fralou Personal Anti-Semites?". Mr. Levin believes the author corrupted the sense of his interview and shared this opinion with Narodnaia Volia. The founders of TAA Alliance-media, in their turn, decided that the newspaper "used the misunderstanding between them and Mr. Levin as means of dishonest fight for the readers' attention". The suit reads, "the publication caused moral damage to us, and Narodnaia Volia must bear responsibility for that". The plaintiff asks the court to find the title of the article and seVieral expressions, used in it, "insulting the honor, dignity and business reputation", to make Narodnaia Volia disprove them and publish its apologies and exact from the defendant 50 million rubles in favor of the editorial board of Obozrevatel. The second article mentioned in the suit appeared on 26 November under the heading "What Kind of Business Feels Well in Belarus?". Its author Maryna Koktysh asked the Belarusian economists to comment on the interview of Siarhiei Atroshchanka to the Interfax Agency where he stated that "Belarus had wonderful conditions for business". A number of expressions, such as "Atroshchanka is not interested in seeing Belarus rise above Shklou business level", "Atroshchanka's expression is nonsense", "I don't understand such patriotic yelping" were regarded by the plaintiff as direct insults. In his suit S. At¬roshchanka said that he, as every citizen of the Republic of Belarus, had the right to free expression of his personal opinion on every matter. At the same time, he thinks that Narodnaia Volia insulted his honor, dignity and business reputation and inflicted moral harm" by publishing the opinions of his opponents. The plaintiff asks the court to oblige the newspaper to publish the "confession of the editorial board" and exact from the defendant 50 million rubles in his favor.

On ***15 January*** Zubr resistance movement celebrated its third anniversary. SeVieral national white-red-white flags were hung out in the main streets of Baranavichy, Prytutski and Charnysheuski streets, on the wires between the buildings. Zubr activists posted stickers with the movement logo and the slogan "Long Live Belarus!" in different regions of Belarus. On 15 and 16 January the stickers appeared in the town of Stoubtsy (Minsk region). The activists posted stickers at the bus stops, markets and railway stations of many other towns and cities.

On ***16 January*** the administration of Belarusian State Youth Theater (BSYT) fired the head of the trade union committee Maryna Dudarava when her contract ended. Uladzimir Mamonka, chair of Minsk regional trade union organization is sure that Dudarava was fired for trade union activity.

On ***16 January*** Aksana Novikava was summoned to court. Minsk Savietski Borough Court was to hear the case of her detention on 24 November during action of protest

against the possible referendum with the purpose to prolong the term of the presidential power of A. Lu¬kashenka. Then the police detained 17 people, Aksana Novikava among them. She was released at 9 p. m. and was supposed to come to court on 25 November. However, Aksana Novikava decided not to come to the court. She explained her position: "I am not going to go there on my own will. If the regime is illegal, its demands are illegal as well, and there is no need to fulfill them". Nevertheless, on 16 January the court decided to fine A. Novikava

On ***16 January*** the police detained two Zubr activists, Aliaksiei Kontar and Paviel Iukhnievich, for handing out Supratsiu newspaper near the tube station Pushkinskaia. At first the guys were taken to the police station, based inside the tube. One of the policemen threatened to beat them if they didn't tell him where the newspaper was printed. Then the detainees were driven to the board of internal affairs of Minsk tube (Frantsysk Skaryna Avenue, 6). In some time the detainees were let go, because the issue data were printed in the newspaper.

On ***16 January*** the last issue of Region-Vesti newspaper came out in Svetlahorsk. This was the forth issue of the newspaper offering the readers only TV listings. However, the subscribers did not receive the last issue even in such a form. Regional department of Belarus' distribution monopoly "Belpochta" informed the newspaper editors about termination of the distribution contract. Since the New Year the only non-state newspaper in Svietlahorsk has been distributed only through subscription. This year the number of subscribers dropped almost three times. Today only one employee works for the Region-Vesti. The newspaper senior editor Mikola Pasiedzka claims they were forced to publish nothing but TV listings, because Svietlahorsk authorities prohibited the local printer to print any information materials under the logo of "Region-Vesti". Iauhien Zhdanovich, deputy head of Svietlahorsk executive committee, strongly denies Pasiedzka's statement. He claims, the executive committee "is not dealing with such matters". "If they have a newspaper, let it be printed," – he told the Press Service of the Be¬larusian Association of Journalists. Svetlahorsk printing press is a municipal property and is directly subordinate to the local executive committee. BAJ press service knows that at present Svetlahorsk printing press prints only one edition – Khimvalakno factory newspaper. It is published twice a month. The printing press is struggling to survive on small occasional orders. "Obviously, it makes no sense for the printing press to refuse from extra orders", the editor is convinced. Let us remind the readers, in October 2003 "Region-Vesti" disappeared from the stalls of rural shops after the chair of local executive committee Baliaslau Pirshtuk saw it in one of village shops and banned local consumer society to sell the newspaper in its retail network. The newspaper staff recalls in the

summer of 2003 the Region-Vesti newspaper was booming. It has increased its circulation, changed the design and started to come out in two colors, having concluded a contract with another, more technically advanced printer in Rechytsa. The newspaper's readership has grown. However, in September the Rechytsa printer terminated the contract with the newspaper on the pretext of "seasonal overload because of calendar printing". All efforts to find another printer in the region have failed. As a result, the newspaper was printed in Minsk, which increased printing and delivery costs. Besides that, the change of the printer affected the newspaper schedule. It got to the readers a lot later than the other local editions and lost a lot of subscribers. "It's purely political pressure", the senior editor of the newspaper Mikola Pasiedzka believes. "They had been after us for a long time, but became especially active after we started to take interest in the activities of local authorities. They issue all punitive orders orally, so that it would seem that our newspaper has closed by itself".

In the middle of January in Smarhon workers of tax inspection twice confiscated from public distributors the non-state Mestnaya Gazeta and the money, received from its sale. It was the version of the issue that contained the materials, written by the journalists of the suspended Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni. In the evening of 15 January the tax ins¬pectors detained three distributors of Mestnaya Gazeta. One more was detained on 16 January. The inspectors drew the reports for unlicensed trade on all of the detainees, referring to the decision of Smarhon Town Executive Committee of 18 December to exclude printed editions from the list of the items, permitted for trade. Meanwhile, on 15 January the editorial board of Mestnaya Gazeta received from the executive com¬mittee the list of the goods permitted for retail, which included blanks, paper, stationery, books and newspapers. Ramuald Ulan, founder of Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni, states that the distributors had the appropriate licenses. "The taxation organs pay such a great attention only to dist¬ributors of Mestnaya Gazeta, which contains articles by journalists of Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni", — said Ulan. At first the non-state Mestnaya Gazeta used to be issued only in Vaukavysk. Since November 2003, when the issue of Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni was suspended by the authorities, Mestnaya Gazeta started to print additional weekly number for the town of Smarhon.

On ***19 January*** it became known that Minsk Maskouski Borough inspection on dues and taxes fined Belarusian Helsinki Committee 380 million rubles (about 176 thousand US dollars) for the alleged non-payment of taxes from TACIS grant. The sum of the fine exceeded all the finances received by Belarusian Helsinki Committee for the whole time since it came into being. The leaders of BHC were convinced that this decision was lawless and complained to court against it.

On ***19 January*** the people's coalition 5+ presented itself. Belarusian Popular Front, United Civil Party, Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada, Party of Belarusian Communists, and Belarusian Labor Party announced they have a common strategy for the upcoming parliamentary election in Belarus. Leaders of the parties Vintsuk Viachorka, Anatol Lia¬biedzka, Stanislau Shushkievich, Siarhiei Kaliakin, and Aliaksandr Bukh¬vostau signed the Memorandum, declaring their common ap¬proaches to the election campaign. The coalition was greeted by mem¬bers of the Polish Parliament, as well as by Lithuanian parliamentarian Vaclav Stankevic. The Five+ is forming a single list of parliamentary candidates. It is based on the formula: "110+110". This means, the coa¬lition will nominate 2 democratic candidates in every constituency. In case a "number one" candidate is not registered, his colleague from the democratic coalition will take his place.

On ***20 January*** Minsk City Court Judge Aksana Budouskaia post¬poned the hearing on liquidation of the human rights NGO till 28 January. The ground for postponement was the NGO's complaint on the Justice Department. The liquidation procedure will continue after the complaint is considered. The representative of the plaintiff, specialist of the Justice department of Minsk City Executive Committee Mr. Shcharbovich, protested against postponement. In his opinion, the Independent Society for Legal Research is intentionally delaying the trial. Aliena Tankachova, the NGO chairperson, is of different opinion: «No matter what happens, we are going to use all possible legal measures to counteract this unfoun¬ded and unpleasant situation. We will do everything to show the absurdity of the whole system».

On ***20 January*** Iryna Makavietskaia learned from Valiery Stryhaliou, head of Homiel Chyhunachny borough Police Department that the police identified the person who threatened to her. It turned out to be Viachaslau Bulkin, 25, employee of Homiel TV and Radio company. However, the law-enforcing bodies did not consider his actions a crime. In the expla¬natory note he had to write for the police, Mr. Bulkin stated he phoned to Iryna Makavietskaia in order to express his opinion, without evil intent and of course without the intention to "lynch" the journalist. He explained the motives for his actions with the fact that Makavietskaia was a journalist of the opposition newspaper that "didn't reflect real life". He also confessed he didn't know her and undertook not to disturb her in future. These explanations evidently justified him in the eyes of the police, but the journalist was indignant at their reluctance to punish the telephone terrorist. She also doubts the offender was acting independently. He confessed that he had found her telephone number in electronic data¬base. The journalist considers it as evidence of malice.

On ***21 January*** the web-site of Charter'97 was attacked by hackers after the publication by Anton Mielnichuk «Belarusian Trace of Child Porn Sellers». The web-site was attacked by simulation of a huge number of hits, which result in blocked access to the site. The Charter-97 press center informs, Anton Mielnichuk is a pseudonym, the journalist who has published the article on their web-site, is not going to uncover his real name. This is done for security purposes, because the article describes criminal methods of Belarusian child porn sellers, some of whom have already been arrested by special services of the USA, Fran¬ce, and Spain. Many Belarusian and foreign mass media reported the arrests, and wrote about Minsk company Regpay, which distributed child porn materials. Anton Mielnichuk published new names and facts about the organizers of this criminal business in Belarus, about their links to employees of the law-enforcing bodies, about schemes of money laundering in Latvia and Russia, and other details of this black business. However, since the morning of January 20 the access to the web-site has been blocked.

On ***21 January*** 21 it became known, that the magazine Asamblieia disappeared from Minsk post office. Usually the edition is sent to public associations in sealed envelopes on behalf of publishers – natural persons. Practically, it was a violation of the secrecy of private corres¬pondence and evident politically-motivated censorship. The NGO ma¬gazine Asamblieia has been published since 1997. It is dedicated to the activities of NGOs in Belarus and it is the only national edition of this kind. On 10 January 2004 the publishers prepared the next issue of the magazine, dedicated to the topic "NGOs and elections", for distribution. The readers were offered analytical materials about possible participation of NGOs in the upcoming parliamentary election campaign. The highlight of the issue was the so-called Grey list – names of state officials, per¬sonally responsible for political repression against non-governmental organizations. Earlier, for many times the bureaucrats of the Ministry of Justice expressed their anger with the acute materials of the magazine, hence quite logically the publishers link the magazine detention with its contents. The lawyer Iury Chavusau, who defends non-governmental organizations, comments the situation: "I think that in this case we deal with a classical violation of the secrecy of private correspondence. The post office employees detained and possibly looked through the mail of private persons, which was directed to hundreds of non-governmental organizations all over the country. Now the post office staff refused to comment on the situation and proposed to appeal to the Procurator's Office". It is probably the first case of mass detention of private corres¬pondence based on political motives in the modern history of Belarus: seVieral hundreds letters with "prohibited" information did not reach the addressees.

On ***21 January*** Iakau Hutman, President of the World Association of the Belarusian Jews, went in front of the building of Aliaksandr Lukashenka administration wearing a jacket with the slogan «Aliaksandr Ryhoravich, you are personally responsible for destruction of Jewish sanctuaries». Mr. Hutman explained the purpose of his action: — I want to warn Mr. Lukashenka about his personal responsibility for demolition of Jewish sacred places. I strive for negotiation on the issues I am raising. I mean destruction of synagogues, cemeteries, and monuments to victims of the Holocaust. Two years ago the authorities sanctioned destruction of the synagogue on Dzimitrava Street, at the moment they are destroying the Khalodnaia synagogue at Niamiha suburb. In Mazyr 2 cemeteries are turned into a construction site; Mazyr authorities also liquidated a memorial sign to the Holocaust victims. Just recently the authorities partially destroyed a Jewish cemetery in Rahachou; in Hrodna they reconstructed the stadium, which had been built on an old cemetery, and just dumped the remains. That's what Iakau Hutman is protesting against. Also he actively supports the appeal of six US congressmen to the McDonald's and Coca-Cola companies not to sponsor the National Olympic Committee in Belarus until the authorities stop destruction of Jewish graves in Hrodna.

On ***22 January*** the Unitarian trading company Hrodnaablsaiuzdruk refused to sell the first number of Den newspaper. The editorial board of the newspaper delivered the newspaper to the expedition department of Hrodnaablsaiuzdruk, but Ianina Dzikievich, chair of the department, refused to accept the newspaper for distribution. In her refusal she referred to the order of Halina Makarevich, vice-head of the enterprise. All attempts of Mikola Markievich, senior editor of Den, to find Halina Makarevich were fruitless.

On ***22 January*** relatives of the missing politicians applied to KGB with the request to institute proceedings against a number of officials. The law says the KGB must react to the application no later than 10 days after its submission. The Belarusian KGB failed to meet the legal requirements. The relatives of the missing political and public figures requested to enter criminal charges against Procurator General Viktar Sheiman, former Minister of the Interior Iury Sivakou, and Minister Uladzimir Navumau, former SOBR commander Dzmitry Paulichenka, and some other persons. The relatives suspect they might be guilty of disappearance of Iury Zakharanka, Viktar Hanchar, Anatol Krasouski, and Dzmitry Zavadski. On February 3 the term for consideration of the application was over, but the KGB still hasn't reacted. According to Aliaksandr Bazanau, head of the KGB PR center, the reply was being prepared, however, he does not know yet, whether the answer is ready, or sent to the relatives. Aliaksandr Bazanau reassured the reporter, the KGB officers were not going to violate the terms for reaction to the application.

On ***22 January*** the heads of Evangelical churches addressed the Ministers of Justice and Education with a complaint against illegal actions of Belarusian National Youth Union (BRSM). The grounds for the appeal to the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Education were numerous cases when high school and college students were forced to join the BRSM against their will and wishes. The letter was signed by Siarhiei Khomich, bishop of the Union of Evangelical Faith Christians, M. V. Sin¬kavets, bishop of the Baptist Union, M. Ja. Astrouski, bishop of the Adventist Church Conference, and A. V. Sakovich of the Full Gospel Association. Heads of the Churches argue recently they have received numerous complaints of students' parents against BRSM activities. Their recruitment campaigns are based on a «voluntary-compulsory» principle, they also explain, BRSM members will have significant privileges in entering state universities and receiving state dwellings. The believers think the concern of the parents is not groundless. «In one of Minsk schools students were told only «the best students» will be accepted. Such motives base membership in a public association on division into «bet¬ter» and «worse» students. Such a principle discriminates the rights of children guaranteed by the legislation: The Code of the Republic of Belarus, Art. 182 «Equal Rights of Children», says «All children have equal rights, irrespective of circumstances around a child and his/her parents», — says the appeal. It is also pointed out that the situation has negative effects on a child's mental and personality development, depriving children of the right to choose opinions, beliefs, and path of life. «All activities of public associations must be based on the legislation and must not violate legal rights and interests of citizens. We would like to draw your attention to Art 4 part 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, which reads: «Ideology of political parties, religious asso¬ciations and other non-governmental organizations, and social groups cannot be established as an ideology compulsory for citizens,» – heads of Protestant Churches point out. The believers ask the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Justice to take appropriate measures to prevent the illegal actions of BRSM, which violate the rights of the citizens.

On ***23 January*** the activist of Zubr movement Iulia Bandarenka (under age) was beaten during the dispersal of the action "Time to respond" that was held in front of the procurator's office in Minsk. "During the action a police colonel came up, said "Come with me", seized me by the collar and pulled to a police car. Near the car I felt a strong blow in the face. I came to conscience only in the car. Blood ran from my lips", — said Iulia Bandarenka to journalists.

On ***23 January*** Minsk Maskouski Borough Court didn't satisfy the complaint of Aliaksiei Lapitski, leader of Zhodzina branch of the BPF Party and Sviatlana Lapitskaia, coordinator of Human Rights Center Viasna, against the actions of Lidzia Iarmoshyna,

chair of Central Elec¬tion Commission, during the election into local deputy soviets in 2003.

On ***24 January*** the police and riot squads dispersed the rock concert in New Club in Minsk. Such Hrodna anti-fascist bands as Kalian and Pet Nihil were to have taken part in the concert.

On ***23-24 January*** the Forum of human rights defenders, co-organised by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) took place in Minsk. More than 150 Belarusian human rights activists, repre¬sentatives of international and foreign human rights organizations and international structures that deal with human rights issues took part in the Forum. Besides Belarusian participants, the human rights situation was discussed by representatives of the largest human rights organi¬zations, such as FIDH, International League of Human Rights, Am¬nesty International and Human Rights Watch. Activists of Czech, Russian, Swe¬dish, Polish, Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Moldovan human rights organizations attended the Forum. International European bodies were represented by the reports of the PACE General Directorate on human rights, General Directorate for External Relations of the EU European Commission, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Head of OSCE mission in Minsk, Ambassador Eberhard Heiken made a short speech at the Forum as well. The well-known Russian human rights activist Sergey Kovalyov also participated in the Forum. The six working groups discussed issues of the national mechanisms for protection of rights and liberties, constitutional guarantees and mechanisms for realization of electoral rights, disappearances in Belarus, mass media situation and the issues of linguistic rights. The Forum adopted a Resolution and elaborated recommendations to Belarusian human rights activists, representatives of the international community and Belarusian authorities.

On ***25 January*** in Smaliavichy the police detained the activist of Zubr Aliaksandr Silitski for distribution of Supratsiu newspaper. Despite of the fact that the newspaper had the issue data printed, the police confiscated the 30 copies Aliaksandr Silitski had during the detention.

On ***26 January*** Minsk Tsentralny Borough Court fined Zubr activist Raman Kazakievich 20 basic units ($ 163) for participation in the picket, conducted on 23 January near the building of the procurator’s office. The picket participants held portraits of the missing politicians and journalist Dzmitry Zavadski and poster “Lukashenka, Sheiman, Sivakou! It’s time to take the responsibility!”. Almost all participants of the action were detained, but only the case against Kazakievich was directed to the court, and the case

against the minor Iulia Bandarenka was passed to a commission on the affairs of under-aged, because they held the poster.

On ***26 January*** the public initiative For Free Religious Creed presen¬ted the results of the monitoring of the religious situation in Belarus for August 2002 – December 2003. The materials of the monitoring were issued under the title “White Book”. The book consists of 10 chapters including the correspondence of religious organization with state structures, articles and interviews in press, reaction to the treaty between the state and the Orthodox Church, international documents and statements on the religious situation in Belarus. The second part of “White Book” (the first one was issued in August 2002) consists of 370 pages and is a document that shows different dimensions of the contem¬porary religious life in Belarus. The third secretary of the US Embassy Ian Turner, the deputy of the Chamber of Representatives Sviryd, the public activist Ivan Savierchanka and the lawyer Siarhiei Shautsou spoke at the presentation. Ivan Saverchanka proposed to establish at the Committee on national and religious affairs a public commission that would deal with the relations between the state and religious organi¬zations.

On ***26 January*** the authorities of Evangelic churches stated its con¬cern with more and more frequent limitations of attendance of liturgies and religious studies applied to their children. For instance, in November 2003 in Navahradak the local authorities put obstacles to the religious studies, organized by Baptists and the school administration summoned the children for “education talks”, categorically prohibiting them to visit churches and threatening to fine their parents. Meanwhile, the acting law on religious freedom demands the agreement of parents only in the case when children younger than 15 years old are present during religious rites. The law doesn’t specify the form of agreement (written or oral). Most probably, these cases aren’t a result of the initiative of the local autho¬rities. For instance, in October 2003 the Committee on religious and na¬tio¬nal affairs directed a letter to Niasvizh City Executive Committee, pointing at “cases of religious activity of a number of protestant societies outside the borders of the territory, specified in their statutes, including unauthorized religious measures in public places and religious education of minors without the agreement of their parents”. That’s why the committee demanded from the local authorities to increase the control of the execution of the law on religious freedom and religious organizations, including regular visits to public services and religious assemblies, rites and ceremonies with the aim to find whether minors are present or educated there without written agreement of their parents.

On ***26 January*** Mazyr public utilities service demanded from Iakau Hutman, leader of the World Organization of Belarusian Jews (registered in the USA) to compensate the expenditures for the demolition of the memorial sign he had installed on the place where many Jews had burned themselves in autumn 1941. The sign was installed without the agreement of the authorities in November 2003, with the personal means of Hutman. Among those who perished there was his grandfather Nisiel Hutman. However, in December the town authorities demolished the memorial sign, after which Ia. Hutman held two unauthorized pickets in front of Presidential administration and went on hunger-strike. As a result he received a bill from the public utilities service, to pay 212 238 rubles for the demolition. The administration of the services promised to apply to court in case he refused to do it.

On ***28 January*** Krychau Town Executive Committee refused to regis¬ter the local branch of Belarusian Association of Journalists. Accor¬ding to the officials, the reason is the absence of the protocol of the branch's sitting among the filed documents. The branch members don't ag¬ree with it and state they have composed all the documents in con¬formity with the acting legislation. The confrontation of the local vertical and BAJ started with the attempt to register the independent publication Ulasny Kamientar in Krychau. According to the journalists, the officials used every formal reason for delaying it.

On ***28 January*** Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ) filed official letters to the procurator of Homiel region A. Palavin and the head of Homiel Regional Internal Affairs Board V. Iaromkin. The BAJ members ask for all-sided, complete and objective investigation of all circum¬stances of the incident that happened to the journalist of Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta Iryna Makavietskaia. The authors of the letter express their incomprehension of the refusal of Homiel police to initiate a criminal case on the fact of the telephone treats to Iryna Makavietskaia in the night between 10 and 11 January. On the other hand, BAJ approved of the decision of Homiel Chyhunachny Borough Procurator's Office to set this decision aside and direct the case materials for further checking. "A number of laws of the Republic of Belarus guarantee the rights of journalists and their defense", — is said in the letter. "According to Article 48 of the Law "On Press and Other Mass Media", hindrance to the legal activity of journalists by citizens, duty officials, state bodies and organizations ensues in administrative, criminal and other kinds of responsibility". Besides, the BAJ members quote Article 198 of the Criminal Code "Hindrance to legal professional activity of journalist", that provides up to three years in jail or personal restraints as a punishment. The authors of the letter are of the opinion that the mentioned incident can be qualified upon this article. BAJ turns the

attention of the procurator's office that this incident "by far exceeded the limits of personal relations between two workers of mass media" and caused a great resonance… "We apply to You, asking to provide the appropriate control with the aim of all-sided, complete and objective investigation into all circumstances of this incident", — reads the document.

On ***29 January*** Belarusian human rights organization Independent Society for Legal Research was liquidated. Judge Aksana Budouskaia satisfied the suit of the justice board where it was stated that the orga¬nization repeatedly violated the law "On public associations" and its own statute. The trial at Minsk City Court lasted for seVieral hours only. Aliena Tankachova, chair of the organization, thusly commented on the decision of Minsk City Court: "I am convinced that the authorities decided to liquidate us for our active defense of the rights and legal interests of the organizations that were in the process of liquidation. If it is the only rea¬son for the liquidation, I can say that our activity is lawful. It is a nor¬¬¬mal element of our activity within the aims and tasks of our organi¬zation. This is why we established the organization in 1996. If we are liquidated, it shows what time and country we live in". ISLR was going to complain against the court verdict to the Supreme Court, but Aliena Tankachova also stated that the organization is ready to continue its activity even without the state registration.

On ***29 January*** Aksana Novikava was fined 3,5 million rubles (about 1 600 US dollars) for unauthorized picket. We should remind, that on the New Year eve she stood in front of Minsk Frunzenski Borough Court with the poster "We need the court of jury".

On ***29 January*** Barysau police detained three activists of the unre¬gistered youth organization ZUBR who handed out Viasna Right to Freedom newsletter in the central square of the city. Detained Aliaksandr Kazakou, Aliaksandr Pieralyhin and Paviel Paddubny were taken to Barysau city board of internal affairs. The police drew up reports charging the detainees with violation of Article #172 of the Code of Administrative Offences. In two hours all three guys were released.

FEBRUARY

Since 1 February private entrepreneurs can execute the functions of the editorial boards of mass media no longer. Those who want to register a new publication or re-register the existing one have to conclude agreements with other juridical bodies for execution of editorial functions.

On ***1 February*** seVieral hundred people took part in the meeting of protest in Homiel under the slogans “Light and heating to everyone at a moderate price!”, “First increase salaries and pensions and then increase the rates!”, “NO to commercial medicine”!”, “NO to people’s poverty”. The meeting also became the presentation of the People’s coalition 5+. Siarhiei Kaliakin, Anatol Liabiedzka and Iury Khadyka took part in it.

On ***2 February*** the rector of the Belarusian State University Vasil Stra¬zhau signed the order to liquidate the International Humanities Institute, a structural unit of BSU. Jewish organizations consider liquidation of this institution which prepared specialists in the field of the Jewish culture, a national discrimination. The BSU rector signed the order to liquidate the Institute after the similar order signed by the Ministry of Education. Neither the Ministry, nor the BSU rector explained the reasons for liquidation. The International Humanities Institute was founded 5 years ago. It was financed by donors interested in restoration of the Jewish education in Belarus. The sponsors’ money was used for reconstruction of the Institute building, new facilities and computer equipment. Besides that, foreign donors promised to grant 30 million USD for building a new institute campus. The order of the new Education Minister Aliaksandr Radzkou to liquidate the institution in the beginning of the new academic year was quite a surprise for the BSU administration. Before the rector Aliaksandr Kazulin was replaced by Vasil Strazhau, the University Board had created an ad-hoc commission for negotiations with the Education Ministry. The only result was that the Institute’s Department of Jewish Studies would not be liquidated, but transferred under the roof of one of the BSU faculties. Jewish organizations are indignant at the authorities’ decision. They appeal to the Belarusian public and the international structures. Last year first students were to graduate from the International Humanities Institute. The BSU rector ordered to give students diplomas of graduation from the BSU Faculty of International Relations. Since 1938 there have been no Jewish schools or educational establishments which offer classes in the sphere of Jewish culture. Representatives of Jewish organizations believe, liquidation of the Institute which trained specialists in Jewish culture, translators, and synagogue staff, is a serious attack on Jewish education in Belarus.

On ***2 February*** Artsiom Buryla, one of the founders of Homiel youth organization Hart was fined for the import of old fly-sheets into Belarus. He was detained on the boarder with the Ukraine. The customs officers found 2 566 fly-sheets of four kinds in the car trunk. Aliaksandr Isachenka, chief inspector of Homiel customs qualified the fly-sheets as printed editions which couldn't be used as private property in such number. As a result, the customs officers composed a report for violation of part 1 of Article #193-9 of the Code of Administrative Offences against A. Buryla who didn't mention the fly-sheets in the tax declaration. Artsiom Buryla explained that these fly-sheets were waste paper because the public voting concerning the possible third presidential term for A. Lu¬kashenka had taken place in Homiel on 7 November 2003 and that he carried the fly-sheets in the car because the family didn't let him keep them at home and he didn't want to throw them out. Nevertheless, Judge Iaraslau Paremski ruled to fine Buryla. The court verdict stated that Artsiom Buryla transported fly-sheets on ZIL-130 truck five weeks later than the real date, the fly-sheets "were quite valuable" and he took the blame. The defendant was surprised with it and didn't agree: "In reality I drove in a motor-car, didn't take the blame. I was present at the trial together with my representative and the cost of the fly-sheets was defined neither by the customs officer, nor the court. This solicitation wasn't satisfied at all", — said Artsiom Buryla.

On ***2 February*** Brest Maskouski Borough Court started the conside¬ration of the suit of Nina Davydouskaia who disagreed with the decision of Brest Maskouski Borough Administrative Commission (BAC), issued on 19 December 2003 to fine her 49 thousand rubles by the terms of part 3 of article 172 "Distribution of printed publications, produced with violation of the established order, containing no issue data, aimed at damaging the state and public order, rights and legal interests of citizens". We should remind that on 10 December Nina Davydouskaia was handing out congratulation fly-sheets devoted to the International Day of Human Rights. The trial started at 10 a.m. and was conducted in room 35 by Jud¬ge I. Kshypach. Not all interested persons were allowed to attend the trial. As a result, some of them applied to the head of the court concerning the violation of the principle of public trial by Judge I. Kshy¬pach. The interests of N. Davydouskaia were represented by the lawyer Uladzimir Maliei, a member of the liquidated public association Human Rights Center Viasna. The interests of the defendant were represented by the secretary of Brest Maskouski BAC Liudmila Malievich. Judge listened to the opinion of the public representative who stated that he didn't see any violations of the established order in the production of the fly-sheets: the circulation was 200 copies and the issue data were put on them, so their content couldn't be aimed at damaging the state and public order and legal interests of citizens. Moreover, the fly-sheet pointed at the legal rights of citizens, guaranteed by the Constitution. On 3

February Judge pronounced the verdict that obliged Nina Davydouskaia to pay 49 thousand rubles fine for distribution of printed production without issue data that "harms state interests". So, in spite of Nina Davydouskaia's objections, the court didn't satisfy her complaint and stated that distribution of fly-sheets without issue data is a violation of the Law on mass media. Nina Davydouskaia was going to complain against the court decision to the regional court.

On ***2 February*** more than 20 Vitsiebsk entrepreneurs gathered in Michelle covered market and went on an indefinite hunger-strike of protest against the orders of Vitsiebsk regional and city executives committees that obliged businessmen to introduce cash registers and sell 70% of Belarusian goods. The majority of the hunger-strikers are women. They also demanded to punish the duty officials who impede the development of private business in Vitsiebsk.

On ***3 February***, at the college council, dedicated to the results of the justice organs in 2003, the minister of justice Viktar Halavanau said that only 10 national public organizations were registered in 2003. The minister pointed that 1 464 applications for registration of public associations were filed. Only 94 (6%) of them were registered, including 23 international ones. On 1 January 2004 18 political parties, 52 national trade unions and 2 214 other public associations existed in Belarus. The minister said that the control of the activity of NGOS increased and 81 public associations were thoroughly checked-up. As a result of the check-ups, the justice organs issued 810 written warnings to the governing bodies of NGOs, which is six times more than in 2002. 51 public associations were liquidated after the justice organs passed to courts materials for their liquidation. "Our justice organs now can be called not registering, but liquidating. 10 national organizations registered for the whole year! It can be compared only to the number of "public associations" registered in the soviet times", — commented the information of the justice ministry Iury Chavusau, coordinator of the collective defense net of NGOs. He is sure that Belarusian authorities fooled themselves: "Having no more need to report to the registering bodies, public activists will come to people and intensify their activity. In 2003, thanks to the Ministry of Justice, the third sector got rid of the illusions concerning the possibility to cooperate with the state, and lost the fear to lose their legal status. ".

On ***3 February*** Natallia Kaliada was fined about 150 US dollars for placing her articles at the site of Charter'97. The court took the opinion that she violated the Code of Administrative Offences. Judge Natallia Vaitsiakhovich considered the ruling of Mikalai Kupryianau, vice-procurator general. The procurator's office stated that placing of articles

at the site of Charter'97 was activity on behalf of unregistered orga¬nization. Natallia Kaliada was detained on 10 December 2003 at the action "We Remember!". She showed her journalist certificate and said to the police she attended the action in order to write an article and place it at the site. The following day the police told her to write expla¬natory note. Soon Natallia Kaliada was summoned to the procurator's office. Judge Natallia Vaitsiakhovich tried to find out what "public initiative" was and whether Charter'97 was a public organization. Finally, she fined the journalist. Hary Pahaniaila, vice-chair of Belarusian Helsinki Com¬mittee, defended Natallia Kaliada at trial.

On ***3 February*** all distributors refused to distribute Den newspaper. The firs issue was printed in Smolensk (Russia), because Belarusian printing houses refused to print it. Hrodna branch of Belsaiuzdruk was the only organization that at first agreed to distribute Den. However, when the newspaper was taken to the expedition department, it was not accepted. The editorial board applied to the official, responsible for distribution. Mikola Markievich, senior editor of the newspaper, said: "They openly said that the administration of Hrodna Belsaiuzdruk received the telephone order from the Ministry of Information not to accept the newspaper for distribution". When Markievich applied to the Ministry of Information, they rejected this accusation. Uladzimir Matusievich, chair of the main analytical board of the Ministry of Information, said the following: "These are the problems of two subjects of economy, what they sign and execute. The situation must be solved in conformity with the law. There are organs that have the right to decide what is legal and what is a violation. It is not our competence." It looks as nobody is to blame that all distributors, even non-state ones, refuse to distribute a registered newspaper even in the case they signed the appropriate agreement. The editorial board tried to distribute the first number of Den on its own.

On ***3 February*** the judgment to Viasna lawyer Uladzimir Labkovich for participation in a protest action against liquidation of the organization was reversed because the judge had refused to use Belarusian language during the trial. Head of Minsk city court Mikhail Ardziaka overruled the judgment made by Leninski Borough Court judge Dz. Zhdanok, who had ruled to fine Uladzimir Labkovich for participation in a sit-in. When on 28 October 2003 the Supreme Court ruled to liquidate the Human Rights Center Viasna, the members of the organization sat on the courtroom floor to protest against the court decision. Eight members of the Human Rights Center received fines for participation in the sit-in under Article #166 of the Code of Administrative Offences (insubordina¬tion to legal demands of the police officers). Lawyer Uladzimir Labkovich was among the action participants. During the trial Judge Dzmitry Zhdanok defeated his motion for translation into Belarusian language, thus violating the constitutional right of the «offender» to use

his mother tongue. Uladzimir Labkovich appealed against the judge's actions. Minsk city court reversed the judgment and sent the case for a new trial. The Ruling of Minsk city court reads: «The judgment is subject for reversal for the following reasons: according to Article #247 of the Code of Administrative Offences, a person under trial has the right to read through the case materials, give explanations, present proofs, enter motions, use legal advice of a lawyer, speak his native tongue and use the services of an interpreter if he does not know the language of the trial, and to appeal against a judgment.

On ***4 February*** Valiery Lievanieuski, chair of Belarusian strike com¬mittee of businessmen, was summoned to Hrodna Leninski Borough Board of Internal Affairs for explanations. The reason for the summons was a special errand of Hrodna regional procurator, to which the letter in which V. Lievanieuski wished happy New Year to the diplomats of the Ukrainian Embassy. This letter was sent to all embassies of Belarus. As a result, Lievanieuski complained to Hrodna Regional Procurator's Office against the violation of the secret of private correspondence.

On ***4 February*** a January issue of the independent newspaper Volnaie Hlybokaie was censored by the administration of Maladechna printing house. The article about the assembly of the BPF party was removed without the agreement of the editorial board and replaced with the advertisement "You could have placed your ad here" and the telephone of the newspaper's advertising department.

On ***4 February*** Smarhon District Court Judge Ala Kindra considered reports of the tax inspection officers, who detained distributors of local press in the middle of January. They were charged with violations of the Rules of street sales. The judge found the distributors not guilty. On January 15-16 tax inspectors detained 4 people selling the Mestnaya Gazeta independent newspaper. However, during the trial it turned out that entrepreneur Volha Kuniauskaia had a license to sell the newspaper. Besides that, the court found a number of inaccuracies in the tax inspectors' reports.

On ***4-5 February*** the Congress of European People's Party took place in Brussels. Its special resolution on Belarus said that "the law concerning political participants and civic non-governmental organi¬zations has been recently amended. The new regulations oppress the said institutions and do not correspond to the basic norms of international law. A number of non-governmental organizations had been closed (one of the most dramatic was the closure of "Viasna 96" – centre for the human-rights defense); seVieral political parties and many non-governmental organizations were refused registration without any sufficient reason." The Party also expressed its deep concern with the process of continuous closing and harassment of political and social organizations acting

according to the principles of democracy, the limitations imposed on the independent mass media, arrests and closure of independent newspapers, the oppression of the system of national education and the closure of independent educational establishments, failure to pursue market reforms declared in different agreements and in the official track of the authorities, the absence of democratically elected organs of power representing the free will of the citizens expressed through elections."

On ***5 February*** market Navapolatsk salesmen went on strike to support their Vitsiebsk colleagues on hunger-strike.

On ***5 February*** the opposition activist Uladzimir Plieshchanka was fined 2,8 million rubles for holding the poster "Collection of signatures against the alliance treaty with Russia, illegally signed by Aliaksandr Lukashenka".

On ***5 February*** in its reply to the complaint filed by Artur Finkievich, Minsk City Court states his arguments are «wrong» and «the admi¬nistrative penalty was imposed on him taking into account the data characterizing his personality and concrete circumstances of the case». In his complaint Artur Finkievich demanded to «reverse the judgment of Savietski Borough Court of Minsk as it was not grounded on the law». Head of Minsk city court Mikhail Ardziaka informed Artur Finkievich that his complain had not been satisfied for the following reasons: «In your complaint you argued that the judgment was illegal, because you think you had committed an extended offence and were already made res¬ponsible for a similar offence on 13 November. The offence you com¬mitted is not extended in time, because the offence in case was stopped on 10 November, and the other offence was stopped on 12 November. The administrative penalty was imposed on you under Article #167-1 part 2 of the Code of Administrative Offences taking into account the data characterizing his personality and concrete circumstances of the case». Let us remind, on 27 November Judge of Minsk Savietski Borough Court Ruslan Kazadaieu sentenced activist of Young Front Artur Finkie¬vich to 15 days in jail. This verdict was pronounced on the day when the term of the previous imprisonment was over and A. Finkievich was to have been released from jail. Before that on 13 November he was sentenced to 15 days in jail for distribution of fly-sheets with the invitation to the action against the possible referendum that could allow A. Lu¬kashenka to run for the third presidential term. Having served the first 15-day sentence, Artur Finkievich was taken right to Minsk Savietski police board. The police drew up another report under Article #167.1 part 2 (distribution of fly-sheets, for which Finkievich was detained a week before the first sentence). As a result, Judge Ruslan Kazadaieu again sentenced the defendant to 15 days in jail. Later, in December 18 Artur Finkievich received the decision of Zavadski borough commission for administrative offences. The decision, dated December 12, ruled

to fine Finkievich 60 thousand rubles (about 30 USD) for «distribution of printed materials with violation of the prescribed order» (Article #172 part 3 of the Code of Administrative Offences). This is the first precedent when a person was twice sentenced to a Maksimal term of imprisonment for the same administrative violation and also fined for it, which means triple punishment.

On ***5 February*** the Ministry of Information suspended the non-state newspaper Zgoda for one month. The founder of the newspaper Aliaksiei Karol found it out on 6 February at the "Plutos-market" printing house when the administration refused to accept for printing the new number of the newspaper. Soon Aliaksiei Karol received by mail the orders: to warn him and to suspend the edition for 1 month – signed by the Minister of information Uladzimir Rusakievich. The reason for the warning was in "gross violations of the law" which, according to the minister, the editorial board of the newspaper practiced for quite a long time. The board is charged with changing of its legal address without informing the Ministry of Information (article 11 of the Law on press) and issuing the newspaper only in Russian and Belarus, not all the languages that are mentioned in its registration certificate. However, the minister thinks that there are also some other serious violations, committed by the editorial board. "The founder of the newspaper Aliaksiei Karol functions as its editor in the capacity of a private businessman whereas in its issue data some other persons, Alies Sdvizhkou, is mentioned, which is a violation of articles 19 and 20 of the Law on press", — is said in U. Rusakievich's order. Besides, the minister found some international violations in the way the issue data of the newspaper were presented. Aliaksiei Karol is sure that the grievances against the editions are only a pretext for the punitive measures. Zgoda newspaper has been issued since 1992. It is registered as an independent informational and analytical weekly. In 2003 the edition grew in volume and circulation: 16 pages instead of 8 with the circulation of 3 050 copies against the previous circulation of 2 500. The newspaper concentrated on analytical materials on serious economic and political issues. According to A. Karol, the Ministry of Information could be dissatisfied with the article "Gas, Gas-main and Integration" that was published in the last number. In his interview to the press service of Belarusian Association of Journalists A. Karol said that the editorial staff would try to bring its documentation in line with the demands of the ministry within a month's term. "However, we are not sure that these will be the last "reasons" for stopping the publication", — he said.

On ***5 February*** it became known that the authorities pressurized Bap¬tist pastors, making them pay fines for heading religious organi¬zations. Such charges were brought against three pastors: Viktar Iau¬tsiukhou, Kanstantsin Ierameieu and Alieh Kurnosau.

On ***5 February*** Brest Maskouski Borough Court rejected the comp¬laint of Nina Davydouskaia who was fined 49 000 rubles for distribution of printed production without issue data that “harmed state interests”. This is the way the police qualified the fly-sheets, handed out by the BPF members on 10 December 2003, the International Day of Human Rights, near the check-point of Brest “Kolieratron” factory. The fly-sheets called workers to defend their rights. In spite of Nina Davydouskaia’s objections, the court didn’t satisfy her complaint and stated that distribution of fly-sheets without issue data is a violation of the Law on mass media.

On ***9 February*** Vitsebskiy Kurier, one of the oldest independent newspapers in Belarus, came out with blank pages instead of TV listings. The editors addressed the readers explaining the reasons. In their appeal to the readers the editors explained the general situation on the informational space of Belarus: economic and political pressure on non-state mass media, liquidation of NGOs, etc. The newspaper editors believe this tendency is upheld by the decision of the Board of the President’s Administration of 27 October 2003. The board decided to transfer all rights to distribution of TV listings to the state-owned BelTA information agency. «This way, it became a state monopoly», — says the appeal. The journalists tell the story of their attempts to sign a contract with BelTA. They spent the whole January trying to get the contract for publishing TV listings for the basic TV channels of the country. On February 3 the editors have finally received the draft contract for February 2004, under which they were supposed to pay 5 million 25 thousand Belarusian rubles (2 340 USD). (Earlier the newspaper paid about 100 thousand rubles – about 45 USD). «This is the total monthly wage of all our staff. Our journalists cannot work without salaries, because we all have families, and not all the readers can afford to pay 1 thousand rubles for an issue… This is just another time when the authorities brutally show the poor Belarusians, what they must listen, watch, and read. We continue to fight for our constitutional rights. We hope that Vitsebskiy Kurier readers buy the newspaper not only because of the TV program. We hope the authorities have made a mistake here…», — the editors say in their appeal to the readers.

On ***6 February*** the international organization Reporters without Borders protested against the administrative punishment of Natallia Kaliada, journalist who put information to the web-site of Charter’97. “Kaliada only expressed her dissent with the endless human rights violations in Belarus”, — consider Reporters without Borders. – “The punishment of the journalist for writing articles on the Internet is an alarm signal for human rights activists and journalists”. “Reporters without Borders” point out that Internet remains the only source of uncensored information in Belarus, where independent press is under strike pressure of the authorities. “We decisively condemn

this attempt to liquidate independent press on the Internet", -reads the statement of the organization.

On ***6 February*** two journalists, Andrei Pachobut from Den news¬paper and Nina Palutskaia from the Internet source belarusfree.org weren't admitted to the session of Hrodna Regional Deputy Soviet. The guards showed to them the lists of the invited journalists, signed by Uladzimir Amielka, chair of the public and political information board. Only representatives of the state mass media were included into the list. At the session Uladzimir Amielka, chair of Homiel REC, reported about his activity during the last year.

On 9 ***February*** Lieanid Sudalienka, chair of Homiel branch of the Na¬tio¬nal public association Legal Initiative stated his intention to collect signatures for deprival of "so called human rights activist Iauhien Novikau" of TV-time if the National State TV and Radio Campaign doesn't do that on its own. In the open letter, submitted by Sudalienka to NSTRC, it is said that the reason for this was the program of Ia. Novikau of 29 January 2004, devoted to human rights in the Czech Republic. "The author ascribed to Czech people immoral and illegal actions in a deeply insulting way. […] Having watched the program, I felt sorry for our, to my mind, crazy TV.", — arguments his demand Sudalienka. He claims from the authorities of Belarusian TV to deprive Ia. Novikau of TV time and stop fomenting of national enmity. Applying to the Czech Embassy and the whole Czech people, Sudalienka expresses his excuses for "the things that happen at the State TV of Belarus".

On ***9 February*** private entrepreneurs of Barysau held a meeting against the financial pressurization. About 300 participants of the autho¬rized meeting gathered at the city stadium. According to the action organizers, it was caused by the escalation of the conflict between the businessmen and the authorities. The leader of Barysau entrepreneurs Viktar Harbachou said to the action participants that a new wave of the economic pressurization of small business had started in the country as a result of the presidential decree on licensing (signed in 2003) and the ruling of the authorities concerning new rules for market trade. He pointed out that the enforcement of these cats would cause mass bankruptcy of small businessmen. According to him, Vitsiebsk entrepreneurs were the first ones to understand it and went on the hunger-strike of protest. Anatol Shumchanka, leader of the public association Perspective told Barysau citizens about his meeting with the hunger-strikers and said they needed support. He said that absence of such support can cause bankruptcy among businessmen from any place, including Barysau. That's why he urged Belarusian entrepreneurs to unite in their

resistance to the authorities and take active part in the one-day nationwide strike. Participants of the meeting in Barysau adopted the resolution in which they urged the authorities to set aside their new inventions, aimed at the liquidation of small business in Belarus.

On ***9 February*** it became known that one of European courts would start the trial of the Belarusian authorities who are suspected in orga¬nization of disappearances of well-known countrymen. Sviatlana Za¬vadskaia stated it after her visit to Belgium. She also pointed that it was impossible to start the case without consultations with influential European politicians. During the last three days in Brussels she met with deputies of the European Parliament, such as Elizabeth Schroeder, Jan Wiersa, Bart Staes and others. At these meetings the possibility of hearings in concerning the issue of political disappearances in Belarus at the European Parliament was discussed as well as the financial and organizational circumstances of the future trial of the Belarusian authorities, suspected of the disappearances. Mrs. Zavadskaia has no doubts that the trial will be conducted. If one of the European courts starts the hearings of the cases of the missing Belarusian opposition activists, the suspected Belarusian officials can be detained in any European country and forcibly taken to the trial. Relatives of the missing persons insist on initiation of this procedure against Viktar Sheiman, Iury Sivakou, Uladzimir Navumau, Dzmitry Paulichenka and some other officials.

On ***10 February*** Belarusian Association of Journalists received the answer from the Procurator's Office of Belarus. I. Padamatska, chair of the Board of the Procurator's Office, informed BAJ that he readdressed its application to the Department of anti-monopoly and cost politics of the Ministry of Economics and asked it to inform the author of the application, vice-head of BAJ Andrei Bastuniets about the results of investigation.

On ***10 February*** Navapolatsk Resource Center Usiaslau Charadzei was warned by Navapolatsk City Justice Board. According to the officials, the NGO violated the law by displacing its legal address.

On ***10 and 11 February*** the web-site of Charter'97 was blocked. In the morning of 10 February the host company of the site registered 980 000 inquiries from different IP-addresses, located all over the world. As a result the company had to stop serving of the site and it was inacces-sible for users for two days. Charter'97 reminds that the first wave of attacks on the site started on 20 December, after an article about Bela-rusian traders of children's pornography was placed on it. Now the site workers consider the actions of unknown hackers not only as an attempt to limit distribution of the information about

pornography magnates, but also make short work of the site. "We have no direct evidence, but all reasons to think that this attack was sanctioned and supported by Belarusian authorities", — reads the special announcement on the site. The journalists remind that about a week before that ago their colleague Natallia Kaliada was fined for preparation and distribution of journalistic information, considering it as activity on behalf of an unregistered body. They also point out that the new wave of the attacks coincided with the international forum in Riga with participation of Belarusian opposition. To their mind, it is a sing that "a large informational clear-up of Belarusian web has already begun".

On ***11 February*** the Committee for Punishment Execution granted parole to Aksana Novikava, sentenced to two years of conditional imprisonment for insult of the President in April 2003. On 17 October 2002 Aksana Novikava handed out in Kastrychnitskaia Square in the Minsk the fly-sheets where Aliaksandr Lukashenka and the law machinery official were accused in relations to kidnapping people. The court summoned none of the witnesses, proposed by the defense, and sentenced Novikava to two years of imprisonment for insult of president with the postponement of the punishment execution for two years. Despite the punishment, Aksana Novikava continued to take part in opposition street actions. She held two independent pickets and was administratively punished for them. She could be directed to a penal colony, but the officials took into consideration the fact that she had a small child and granted parole to her.

On ***11 February*** Aliaksandr Ihnatsiuk, founder and senior editor of the non-state newspaper Vecherniy Stolin received by mail a warning and an order to suspend the newspaper for three months. Both documents were signed by the Minister of information Uladzimir Rusa-kievich. According to the minister, the publication grossly violated the legislation: articles 30 and 31 of the Law on press and seVieral rulings of the Council of Ministers. The newspaper was accused in having exceeded the 30% limit for ads (applied towards newspapers that aren't registered as specialized advertisement ones) in its issues 42 and 44 for 2003. The second pretension to the newspaper concerned the change of its topics from practical, production and leisure to mass and political, without informing the Ministry of Information within a month's term. As a result, on 5 February Minister Rusakievich issued a warning to the newspaper and on 6 February ordered its three month long suspension. We should remind that on 26 February 2003 the newspaper had been already suspended for three months by the information minister M. Padhainy as a result of two warnings for violation of article 5 of the Law on press. However, on 26 April the issue was resumed: the minister satisfied

Ihatsiuk's petition to set aside the punishment due to the hard financial situation of the edition. On 24 February Stolin District Court also found Aliaksandr Ihnatsiuk guilty under Article #369 of the Criminal Code (insulting a representative of authorities). Ihnatsiuk has to pay Uladzimir Pashkievich, former chairperson of Stolin district executive committee, 480 000 rubles (about 225 USD) for «intentional insult». Pashkevich requested to bring criminal charges against Ihnatsiuk after a series of critical articles about Pashkievich in Vecherniy Stolin.

On ***11 February*** Minsk authorities didn't permit Young Front activists hold a procession in the center of the city on 14 December in order to celebrate St. Valentine's Day. The officials motivated their decision with the fact that the law prohibited holding mass street actions near state institutions and diplomatic missions. Despite the prohibition, the youth decided to hold the action in the center of Minsk.

On ***12 February*** it became known that an amnesty was declared and therefore the prison term to Iury Bandazheuski was decreased by a year. On hearing this news the prisoner's wife Halina Bandazheuskaia began to count how long he had been in prison, how much time is left to him and what he could hope for: "Two amnesties have taken place. If we subtract two years from the eight of his prison term, six are left. Three of them, a half of the term, have already passed, that's why he can apply for changing imprisonment for limitation of personal freedom." Workers of the Minsk penitentiary confirmed that court can review Iury Bandazheuski's case and change his sentence, for instance apply personal restraint instead of imprisonment. They didn't say exactly when it could take place, but said that usually it is done quite quickly. Meanwhile, numerous human rights organizations of the world and well-known politicians continue to demand acquittal and release of Iury Banda-zheuski, thinking that he has been punished for his scientific views on the Chernobyl tragedy that differed from the official ones. In their recent answer to the UN Committee on human rights the Belarusian authorities argue that Bandazheuski is a usual bribe-taker who was justly punished. It is known that the former provost didn't plead guilty and applied to the UN Committee on human rights after unsuccessful applications to Belarusian courts. The Committee filed an inquiry with the Belarusian Government concerning Bandazheuski's complaint and received an answer to it. Hary Pahaniaila, who defended Bandazheuski in courts, familiarised himself with the answer and found it very formal. According to him, Belarusian authorities pretended not to notice the complaint of Iury Bandazheuski concerning violations of his rights, such as illegal arrest, keeping in the conditions that can be considered as torture and insult of his human honor and dignity. Besides, Hary Pahaniaila said that

Bandazheuski's rights to defense, independent and objective trial and the right to complain against the sentence were violated."

On ***12 February*** the International human rights organization Amnesty International has started an action of support to the imprisoned professor Iury Bandazheuski. Amnesty International turns attention to the wor-sening of Bandazheuski's health and urges to send letters to Aliaksandr Lukashenka and other officials. Amnesty International quotes the letter of the imprisoned professor to his wife Halina: "I am really grateful, that I am not forgotten. The state of my health is not the best one, I am in depression… Medicine does not help and has many by-effects, including allergy. My last strength is leaving me''.

On ***12 February*** a one-day warning strike of businessmen took place in Belarus. More than 20 000 persons took part in this action of solidarity with Vitsiebsk entrepreneurs who had hungered for 12 days because of the decision of Vitsiebsk officials to give the status of trading centers to all markets, which resulted in the increase of the rent, confiscation of goods and obligatory introduction of cash registers. As a result of such actions the overwhelming majority of entrepreneurs could go bankrupts. The open markets of Hrodna, Minsk and Vitsiebsk were the most active in striking. Salesmen of Zhdanovichy, Uruccha, Svielta, Chervenski and some other markets of Minsk supported the strike. The strikers stated that in the case the authorities failed to start the negotiations with them by 20 February, on 1 March they would go on indefinite strike with non-payment of the common tax and other fees.

On ***12 February*** Hrodna journalists Andrzej Pisalnik (Den news-paper) and Iryna Charniauka (Belorusskaya Gazeta) were expelled from the council of the information board of Hrodna Regional Executive Committee with the participation of Lilia Ananich, vice-minister of information. The correspondent Iulia Darashkievich wasn't let in at all. It was the second case for the week when the board officials interfered with the professional duty of journalists. The council was devoted to discussion of the schedule of ideological work for the current year. The council was also attended by the senior editor of Vecherniy Grodno newspaper A. Kuchynski, the director of Hrodna TV and Radio Company U. Piartsou, the correspondent of BelTA agency R. Salata, editors of state newspapers and chairs of information board of district executive committees – about 50 persons in total. Paviel Skrabko detained Andrzej Pisalnik and Iryna Charniauka at the hall entrance. He stated that it was an "internal measure" and demanded from them to leave the executive committee. The journalists, in their turn, referred to the law on press that guaranteed their right to attend such meetings without invitation and entered the hall. Then P. Skrabko called a guard of Hrodna REC, who demanded from A. Pisalnik to leave

the hall. I.Charniauka stayed there till the beginning of the council. Uladzimir Amelka, chair of the information board, proposed people present to vote for the removal of the journalists from the hall. The proposal was supported by seven persons, but Mr. Amelka stated that the decision was taken “unani-mously”. I. Charniauka subdued, but stated she would demand an excerpt from the council minutes with the results of the voting.

On ***13 February*** Iryna Makavietskaia, the correspondent of Belorus-skaya Delovaya Gazeta in Homiel region was summoned to Homiel Regional Procurator’s Office. Aliaksandr Ielisieieu, chair on law execution supervision department read to her the text of the warning, issued to her by the regional procurator Alieh Palavinka. He refused to give the document to her, but agreed to read it for Dictaphone recording. The reason for the warning was the article by I. Makavietskaia Vikont Didn’t Meet Belarusian Reality, published in #104 for 10 December 2003. The procurator stated that in this publication the journalist had violated Article #4 of the Law on press and Article #9 of the Law on juridical proceedings and the status of judges of the Republic of Belarus. According to him, I. Makavietskaia published the materials of a court case without the written permission of the judge and put to doubt ... his independence and the lawfulness of the issued verdict ... concerning the case on the bankruptcy “BST Ltd.” The procurator warned the journalist that in the case she continued to violate the law she could be punished for it. We should remind that the Ministry of Information had warned Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta for this article on 30 December 2003. The minister Uladzimir Rusakievich considered that the newspaper violated Article #5 of the law on press, having published the materials of the case without the written permission of the judge.

On ***14 February*** the Young Front members conducted the eighth action, devoted to celebration of St. Valentine’s Day, this time under the slogan “We Love Europe! We Love Belarus!”. The procession devoted to St. Valentine’s Day wasn’t sanctioned by the authorities, who stated that the law prohibits mass street actions near the buildings of state institutions and diplomatic missions. Six action participants were detained: Barys Haretski, Artsiom Litvinau, Paviel Sieviaryniets, Andrei Shybko, Iulia Sipovich and Alies Vasileuski. The police took the detained to Minsk Tsentralny Borough Board of Internal Affairs. There the detained were told to write explanatory notes. The police officers drew up reports for violation of article 167.1 of the Code of Administrative Offences (violation of the order of holding of mass actions) and at about 3 p.m. released all the detained.

On ***17 February*** the police detained the Zubr activists Aliaksiei Kon¬tar and Liuba Kuchynskaia for posting fly-sheets in Frantysk Skaryna Avenue in Minsk. The detainees were taken to Minsk Partyzanski Bo¬rough Board of Internal Affairs and detained there

for an hour. Then the police let them go without composing any reports. At that time Zubr activists also distributed printed production in Baranavichy, Biaroza, Ivatsevichy and Slonim. They posted hundreds of fly-sheets “He Must Retire!” near shops, markets, at railway and bus stations, in the centers of towns and cities and in the cars of some trains.

At ***night of 17-18 February*** policemen from Hrodna Leninski Borough Board of Internal Affairs tried to get into the flat of Valiery Lievanieuski, the leader of the strike committee of entrepreneurs. They said they wanted to pass summons to him, but Lievanieuski was absent.

On ***18 February*** Minsk Leninski Borough Court obliged the editorial staff of Narodnaia Volia to compensate the court expenditures to the open joint-stock society Alliance-media and publish disproof of the article that was mentioned in the suit. At the same time, Judge Valiantsina Ziankevich didn’t satisfy the demand to exact from Narodnaia Volia 50 million rubles as compensation for the moral harm to Alliance-media. The consideration of the suit of “Alliance-media” (founder of the Oboz-revatel newspaper) to the newspaper Narodnaia Volia on protection of honor, dignity, business reputation and compensation of the moral harm started on 16 February. The reason for the conflict was the article “Sergey Atroshchenko’s Obozrevatel: Bandit Treatment of Lieanid Levin”, pub-lished on 3 September 2003. The author of the article analyzed the conflict between the editorial board of Obozrevatel and the head of the Union of Jewish organizations and communities Lieanid Lievin that resulted from the article by Obozrevatel “Are deputies Kastsian, Navasiad and Fralou Personal Anti-Semites?”. Mr. Lievin was of the opinion that the author of the latter article corrupted the sense of his interview and shared this opinion with Narodnaia Volia. The founders of Alliance-media, in their turn, decided that the newspaper “used the miscomprehension between them and Mr. Lievin as a means of dishonest struggle for the readers’ attention”. One of the representatives of Narodnaia Volia at trial, vice-head of Belarusian Association of Journalists A. Bastuniets thinks that the court didn’t give the appropriate evaluation to the actions of the editorial staff of Obozrevatel towards L. Lievin and groundlessly considered the journalist’s opinion as “false information”. “The court decision gives reasons to be complained against. However, its complete evaluation can be made only when we receive its motivation part”, — says the lawyer. According to him, it was worth complaining against this verdict to Minsk City Court.

On ***19 February*** Aksana Novikava was detained in front of the Pre-sident’s Staff building while handing to officials the appeal of citizens who protest against the demolition of their private houses and violation of their rights. The appeal spread by

Novikava was signed by more than 100 citizens. Aksana Novikava was taken to Minsk Police Department of Leninski Borough #1. The police drew up a report for violation of Article #172 of the Code of Administrative Offences (distribution of printed materials, issued with violation of the established order, containing no issue data and damaging state and public order, rights and legal interests of citizens". Then Aksana Novikava was released. She could be warned or fined about 40 US dollars because of the police report.

On ***19 February*** the human rights activist Dzmitry Salauiou was summoned to Navapolatsk Procurator's Office to give explanations concerning some facts, mentioned in the letter, submitted by Navapolatsk Executive Committee. The letter stated that some unregistered orga-nizations maintained their activity in the city. Among them the authorities mentioned Human Rights Center Viasna. They also submitted Nasha Prava bulletin as evidence. The bulletin contained his announcement: If your rights have been violated, you can get free legal assistance from human rights defender Dz. Salauiou. According to Salauiou, the pro-curator's office staff showed him the letter and demanded explanations. He, in his turn, refused to answer referring to article 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus that allows individuals not to give information that can be used against them.

On ***19 February*** the Supreme Court of Belarus rejected the suit of Smarhon businesswoman Volha Kuniauskaia. She complained against the refusal of Hrodna Regional Executive Committee to register her private Unitarian enterprise Region-press. Having read the verdict, the judge Liudmila Kaliesnikava said that she would issue "private admo¬nition" to Homiel REC for having not mentioned the reasons for their refusal and answered too late. The trial started on 13 January but was twice postponed. As a result the case was demanded by the Supreme Eco-nomic Court. We should remind that in the beginning of March 2003 Volha Kuniauskaia, wife of Ramuald Ulan, editor of Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni, applied to Homiel REC for registration of the private Unitarian enterprise Region-press. The officials refused to register it without any explanations. Before that Hrodna Regional Economic Court annulled the registration of the individual entrepreneur Ramuald Ulan, after which he stated his intention to register a juridical body that would take the functions of the editorial board.

On ***19 February*** the Supreme Economic Court rejected the suit of the editorial board of Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta against the Ministry of Information. The journalists asked the court to set aside the warning, issued to the newspaper on 26 December 2003. The warning was issued for three articles by the journalist Siarhiei Satsuk "Escaped through a window. A serial maniac destroyed the myth about the imp¬regnability of the prison" (#82 of 24 September 2003), "One against all" (#84 of 1 October 2003) and "Non-

existent attempt" (#96 of 12 November 2003). The Ministry decided that the mentioned publications contained false information, which is violation of Article #32 of the Law on press. The warning was initiated by KGB which applied to the Ministry of Information and "passed the materials to it". Alieh Bastuniets, who represented the newspaper at trial, thinks that in this case the Ministry of Information actually acted as a court: according to the law on press the persons or institutions whose rights were infringed by false information must apply for its refutation to the editorial board and complain to court in the case of refusal. A. Bastuniets pointed out that all three articles were written in the genre of journalist investigation. "The KGB reaction indicates the attitude of the state organs to this direction of journalism", — thinks the lawyer. The court decision came into effect and could be complained against only in review order. So the court left in force two of the three warnings to the newspaper. The editorial office intended to complain against the third one (issued for violation of Article #5 of the law on press).

On ***20 February*** Minsk Leninski Borough Court was to have conside-red the administrative case against Uladzimir Labkovich, lawyer of Human Rights Center Viasna. We should remind that the court verdict to administratively punish U. Labkovich was set aside because of the refusal of the judge to lead the trial in Belarusian. However, the judge Aliena Tsierashkova postponed the trial to 4 March, asking Labkovich "Haven't you learned Russian yet?". First of all, it is worth describing the circumstances in which Uladzimir Labkovich, a professional lawyer, was fined. In October 2003 the Supreme Court of Belarus considered the civil case on liquidation of one of the most influential human rights organizations of Belarus, Human Rights Center Viasna. On 28 October Judge Valiantsina Kulik ruled to liquidate the organization and Viasna members expressed their protest by sitting down on the floor in the trial hall. For this "violation" eight members of the organization were fined upon article 166 of the Code of Administrative Offences of Belarus, "disobeDence to legal claims of the police". The layer Uladzimir Labko-vich was one of the fined. The administrative cases were considered by the judges of Minsk Leninski Borough Court Aliena Tsierashkova, Aliaksandr Shylko and Dzmitry Zhdanok. As it often happens at trials of opposition or public activists, judges led the trials in Russian and defendants spoke Belarusian. It's worth mentioning that members Human Rights Center Viasna speak Belarusian, even the trial concerning the liquidation of the organization was held in Belarusian. While being tried, the chair of Viasna Alies Bialiatski and its lawyer Uladzimir Labkovich demanded Russian-Belarusian interpreter service. Judge Aliaksandr Shylko, who tried Bialiatski, satisfied his demand, whereas Judge Dzmitry Zhdanok denied Labkovich his legal right to use the native language (which is also one of the two state languages) and demanded he speak Russian. Maybe it was for this

insistent demand that Judge fined him 10 minimal wages while all other participants of the protest actions were fined only 5. Uladzimir Labkovich complained against actions of the judge to Minsk City Court, which defeated the verdict to fine him and returned the case for re-consideration. The ruling of Minsk City Court said: “The verdict is to be abolished for the following reasons: “According to article 247 of the Code of Administrative Offences of Belarus the administratively punished persons have the right to get familiarized with the case materials, give explanations, present evidence, petition, use legal assistance, speak in the native language and use the services of an interpreter if he doesn’t have the command of the language in which the trial is conducted, complain against the verdict. In his complaint U. Labkovich stated that the court groundlessly refused to provide him with an interpreter. The minutes of the trial sitting reveal that, while asked by the Judge about the reasons for such a petition, U. Labkovich answered: “I can’t understand everything in detail, as I don’t understand Russian. I understand common language, but the legal terms are quite obscure to me”. So, the court violated the right of U. Labkovich to use the services of an interpreter, which entails abolishment of the ruling.”

On ***20 February*** the Procurator’s Office of Belarus brought official charges against Iahor Rybakou, former chair of Belarusian State TV and Radio Company. He was charged by terms of part 3 of Article #430 of the Criminal Code of Belarus – receiving of a bribe by a responsible official. This crime is punished with 7-15 years in jail with or without property confiscation and with the prohibition to occupy certain posts and deal with certain kinds of activity. By the way, half a year after Iahor Rybakou became the chair of the company, members of the professional bureau of Perspective broadcast direction submitted a letter to a number of state organs. They demanded to deprive Iahor Rybakou of the occupied position. As a result of “duty investigations” all persons who signed the letter were fired. Iahor Rybakou was compatriot and protйgй of Aliaksandr Lukashenka and conducted the direct pro-presidential policy on the TV.

On ***20 February*** the Main economic board of the Presidential Admi-nistration groundlessly refused to prolong the rent agreement to Belarusian Congress of Democratic Forces. The independent press center considered it as a political provocation on the eve of the eve of the visit of the Commission of the European Union for the investigation of violations of workers’ rights in Belarus.

On ***22 February*** more than a hundred people stood along Frantsysk Skaryna Avenue, from the main post office to Kastrychnitskaia Square. They held portraits of Hienadz Karpienka who died in strange circums-tances and portraits of the missing, Iury

Zakharanka, Viktar Hanchar, Anatol Krasouski, Dzmitry Zavadski. They stood facing the carriageway, at a distance of 2-3 meters.

On ***23 February*** Young Front activists picketed the US Embassy in order to draw the attention of American diplomats to manifestations of the state anti-Semitism in Belarus. Nine activists of Young Front and Iakau Hutman, president of the World Association of Belarusian Jews, held the poster "Lukashenka ruins monuments to Holocaust victims. President Bush, please help to save the historical heritage of the Jewish, Belarusian and American peoples!". The picketers also prepared appeal to the US president and passed it to the embassy. They stated that du-ring the last 10 years the propaganda of xenophobia and ruining of Jewish monuments became a usual practice in Belarus. The action lasted for seVieral minutes. Then the police detained the picketers.

On ***23 February*** Tobias Ljungval received entrance visa at the Bela-rusian Embassy in Stockholm and on 24 February flew to Belarus through Vienna. The Swedish journalist said the following about the events that took place at the international airport Minsk-2: While the custom officers were checking my passport, some computer problems happened. The officer looked at my passport, then at some papers and called the head of the shift. He showed at the display and whispered something. The head of the shift took my passport and went away. I spent much time waiting till he returned. When he came, he said that it was prohibited to me to enter Belarus and that I had to return to Vienna on the same plane. I asked what was the reason for not letting me into Belarus, but they either couldn't or didn't want to explain it". Uladzimir Niestsiarovich, worker of the press-center of the State committee of border forces, explained that countries can prohibit entrance to individuals without any explanations. Tobias Ljungval is well familiar with the situation in Belarus. In 2003 he published in Sweden 3 000 copies of a book on Belarus. The book includes his personal observations made during the 18 visits to Belarus. In the beginning of November 2003 Mr. Ljungval, who is also a member of the international board of the liberal party of Sweden, came to Belarus as an election observer. He was ready to answer any questions of Belarusian judges in Belaaziorsk, but wasn't allowed to come there. He was invited as a witness to the trial in Belaaziorsk concerning the election to the town soviet. The trial was to have started on 25 February, and on 24 Mr. Ljungval wasn't allowed into Belarus.

On ***23 February*** Zubr activists hung out a white-red-white flag in Sukharau suburb in Minsk on the wires of 25-storeyed building. In seVieral such cases the authorities were unable to remove the flags for seVieral days or even weeks.

On ***23 February*** Aliaksandr Lukashenka signed decree #111 On the improvement of the staff work and the ideological work in the Republic of Belarus. The order makes chair of organizations personally responsible for the state of ideological work in their collectives.

On ***24 February*** the members of Christian-Democratic BPF Party Uladzimir Plieshchanka and Aliaksandr Salauian were detained in Vitsiebsk for unauthorized picketing with the posters "Collection of signatures against the alliance treaty with Russia, illegally signed by Aliaksandr Lukashenka" and "Went to Election – Supported Regime". Having read these words the police patrol noted them down and drove away. On their return (Plieshchanka believes they consulted with their authorities) they ordered both activists to get into the car. They also wanted to detain Mr. Khamaida who stood near and handed out Belorus-skaya Delovaya Gazeta, but one of them said that they had detained him for many times already and every time had to let him go, because handing out newspapers wasn't an administrative violation. Uladzimir Plieshchanka and Aliaksandr Salauian were driven to Vitsiebsk Chyhu-nachny Police Board. There the police drew reports for unauthorized picketing.

On ***24 February*** the police major Kudzinau summoned the human rights activist Dzmitry Salauiou to the local police station where he de-monstrated to him the ruling of the city executive committee to administr-atively punish him for the activity on behalf of the unregistered organi-zation Human Rights Center Viasna. Nasha Prava bulletin was attached as evidence. The bulletin contained the announcement: If your rights have been violated, you can get free legal assistance from human rights defender Dz. Salauiou. Salauiou refused to answer referring to article 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus that allows individuals not to give information that can be used against them.

On ***24 February*** the discussion on Chernobyl issues took place in Minsk on the initiative of the German Ambassador Helmut Frick in coope-ration with Chernobyl's Children charity. One of the discussion topics was the CORE program (Cooperation for rehabilitation) that could be fulfilled with the participation of the UN, the EU and Belarusian authorities. Representatives of the UN and the EU countries stood for drawing of as many NGOs as possible to participation in the program. However, Hienadz Hrushavy, chair of Chernobyl's Children, stated: "Our state is built in such a way that public can't take part in the dialog, really interact or discuss decisions. That's why the CORE program can be smothered with the administration standards and this good idea would give no results. The state organs are not ready to partnership with civil society, which is the main condition of the fulfillment of such outstanding programs as CORE». According to H. Hrushavy, the program declared greater participation of the local

population and public organizations than it could guarantee. Not a single Belarusian public organization was present in the organs established within the framework of the CORE program. The authorities didn't want to cooperate with civil society and, moreover, wanted to establish pseudo-public organization and conceal information. For instance, the chief doctor of one of Minsk clinics prohibited to its subordinates to take part in the discussion for the fear of being fired.

On ***24 February*** the Ministry of Information asked BelTA agency to explain the new order and conditions for the publication of TV programs in mass media. Siarhiei Bulatski, vice-minister of information, stated it in the official answer to the request of Belarusian Association of Journalists concerning the situation with the distribution of the television diary of Belarusian channels. "We still have no answer to this question", — reads the letter. We should remind that on 23 December Belarusian Association of Journalists applied to the Procurator of Belarus, the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Information with the request to explain the situation with the distribution of the TV diaries and state what measures would be taken to prevent violation of Belarusian anti-monopoly and price-forming legislation. On 10 February BAJ received a letter from the Procurator's Office where it was stated that the letter was forwarded to the Department of anti-monopoly and price policy of the Ministry of Economy. At that time BelTA state agency sold the basic TV diary at different cost to different mass media, from 100 thousand to 5 million rubles.

On ***24 February*** the International League for Human Rights sent open letter to Aliaksandr Lukashenka with the expression of concern with the situation of Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta, including the verdict of the Supreme Economic Court that left a warning to the newspaper in force. "This is one more assault on the newspaper, which has already received seVieral warnings", — reads the letter. The organization urged A. Lukashenka to stop the persecution of independent mass media and let journalists do their work.

On ***24 February*** it became known that the Dutch section of Amnesty International collected more than 250.000 signatures for the protection of human rights defenders all over the world. These are those men and women who alone or together with others promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. In many countries they take great risks in doing so. On the 24th of February an Amnesty delegation arrived at the Belarusian embassy at 11.30 AM. The box was put on the sidewalk in front of the embassy. Unfortunately the representative of the embassy, who opened the door, refused to accept the petitions. He explained that the facts mentioned

in the publications of Amnesty on Belarus are not true. Therefore the embassy saw no rea-son whatsoever to accept the signatures. He also declared that human rights issues are the “internal affairs” of a country. When asked if it would be possible to have a discussion on the concerns of Amnesty International about human rights defenders in Belarus in the near future, he answered that he was not in a position to comment on this issue. The members of the delegation put the box back on the truck and left for Amsterdam. Amnesty Netherlands will of course find another way to bring its concern and that of 250.000 Dutch citizens under the attention of the Belarusian authorities.

On ***24 February*** the financial investigations department of the State control committee continued the investigation of the alleged non-payment of taxes by Belarusian Helsinki Committee. A. Kurto, senior inspector of the department, summoned BHC chair Tatsiana Protska and its ac-countant Tatsiana Rudkievich for a “talk”.

On ***25 February*** the organization of Free Trade Union of Belarus of Brest State University faced the danger of liquidation. The initiative to liquidate the unit of the free trade union belonged to the local tax inspection. This organ checked-up the organization for seVieral months and found no violations. That’s why the formal reason for the liquidation was confessed the absence of stable legal address. Two years ago the university authorities deprived the trade union of the possibility to act on the territory of the educational establishment. That’s why the trade union organization had to register in the building owned by Brestskiy Kurier independent newspaper. However, the tax inspection and the district administration considered this registration as invalid and obliged the organization to re-register, whereas the chair of the trade union organization Valiantsin Lazarenkau stated there were no legal grounds for it. Despite of the official pressurization, about 50 lecturers of the university remained members of the trade union organization, which was about 10 years old.

On ***26 February*** Belarusian Association of Journalists received the answer of the Ministry of Economics to its request concerning the new order for publication of the TV-program by mass media. In the letter of the vice-minister Uladzimir Adashkievich it was said: “In the case of the cost discrimination of editorials staffs by the Unitarian enterprise BelTA the Ministry of Economics will consider the motivated complaint of any subject of economy against violation of its legal rights”. The ministry reminded that subjects of economy had the right to independently make discounts to purchasers of the TV-program. Nevertheless, “the used discounts are to be equal to all purchasers irrespectively to the form of property”. U. Adashkievich also referred to the Law “On counteraction to monopolistic activity and development of concurrence” that didn’t

allow any actions, aimed at elimination of concurrence by violation of rights of other subjects of economy to free concurrence.

On ***26 February*** the General Procurator's Office of Belarus abolished the ruling to suspend the criminal cases against the vice-editor of Belo-russkaya Delovaya Gazeta Iryna Khalip, initiated for the article "Afghan Greyhounds" published in 2002 in the newspaper annex Dlya Sluzhebnogo Polzovaniya. Iryna Khalip is accused of libeling Viktar Sheiman who was procurator general at that time. Iryna's case was investigated by Minsk prosecutor's office investigator for most important cases Viktar Fi

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On ***1 March*** Navapolatsak Procurator's Office informed Dzmitry Salauiou, representative of the Human Rights Center Viasna, that "in case he represents the unregistered Human Rights Center Viasna or acts on behalf of the above mentioned organization, he might face charges under Art 167.1 of the Code of Administrative Offences". Dzmitry Salauiou was told Navapolatsk city administration and the justice board of Vitsiebsk regional administration informed the procurator's office that in December 2003 – January 2004 somebody distributed a newsletter containing information about activities of the Human Rights Center Viasna and articles on behalf of this organization. The memo, signed by Uladzimir Kamarou, head of Navapolatsak city administration, says "the above-mentioned circumstances demonstrate the intention to act on behalf of the Human Rights Center Viasna, which is not registered in the appropriate order". Dzmitry Salauiou considers the procurator's decision illegal. He was mentioned in the newsletter as a person, not a representative of the organization. Salauiou thinks, the pressure on him is just an attempt to intimidate him and stop his human rights activity. "This is just another event among cases of pressure on human rights activists in our country", — he commented.

On ***1 March*** Minsk Piershamaiski Borough Court started hearing the suit of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee and its chair Tatsiana Protska against the Belarusian TV and Radio Company. On 2 November, 2003 the Belarusian State Channel program «In the center of attention» showed a negative story about BHC, Tatsiana Protska, and other human rights activists. Press-service of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee informs, the BHC Board urged the TV Company to apologize and refute the information which damage the image of BHC and honor and dignity of its chair – Tatsiana Protska. However, the TV channel management refused to do that, and BHC had to sue them in court. The respondents in the suit are the National State TV and Radio Company, the program host Siarhiei Khamiantouski, and the script author Iury Prakopau. Pier¬shamaiski borough court judge Aniskevich set the date of the next court session, 17 March. The BHC press-service stated the authorities conti¬nued their campaign of discrediting human rights defenders. On 29 February 2004 the "Center of Attention" program accused BHC of failure to pay taxes, and gave untrue information about income of BHC members and property owned by Tatsiana Protska.

On ***2 March*** Mahilou City Executive Committee didn't permit a social meeting because of «absence of full data about its organizers, indicated in Article #5 of the Law on meetings, street processions, demonstrations and pickets. Its organizers planned to hold the rally on 6 March in protest against growth of prices for utility services, low life

standards, unemp-loyment, and bad conditions for businesses. The meeting organizers – Siarhiei Famin (Free Trade Union), Uladzimir Shantsau (United Civil Party), and Ryhor Kostusieu (Belarusian People's Front) – said the authorities have grossly violated the Constitution and claim the rally will take place anyway.

The event that took place in the city of Baranavichy on 2 March be-came an all-Belarusian sensation: all members of the branch of the pro-governmental Belarusian Republican Youth Union (BRSM) at Bara-navichy College of Light Industry, including the head of the branch Mikita Sasim, joined the opposition resistance movement Zubr… The autho-rities' reaction was swift. On the following day they attempted to change the situation and intimidate the new Zubr members.

On ***2 March*** the justice board of Minsk City Executive Committee warned Minsk public association Dyiaryiush that dealt with cultural and educational activity. The reason for the warning was the membership of a citizen of other settlement in the organization. According to the chair of the organization Larysa Androsik, a citizen of Astrashytsi town really was a member of organization. However, he was a member of organization for a long time, and during the re-registration the authorities had no pretensions to it. Some time ago he left Minsk and was excluded from the organization at its re-election assembly. SeVieral days later the justice board of Minsk CEC warned the organization. According to L. Androsik, she simply didn't manage to deliver the excerpt from the protocol of the sitting in time. That's why she expressed the hope that the justice board would set the warning aside after her application to it.

On ***2 March***, on the 62nd anniversary of 5'000 Jews killed in Minsk ghetto a meeting of commemoration took place at Jama (the Pit) memorial. This mournful date was commemorated on March 2 by a meeting at the Jama memorial, which gathered about 50 people. The meeting gathered prisoners of the Minsk ghetto, Jews, who survived the Holocaust and those, who were born after the Second World War. Architect Lieanid Levin, author of the Jama memorial, says the 2nd of March is a holy day. «I believe, this day has become a holy one not only for Jews, but also for all Minsk citizens. We all lived in one city, in one house, as they say. These 5 thousand victims are not the only people killed. About 100 thousand Jews were killed in Minsk ghetto. During the war years approximately 800 thousand Jews were killed». Heads of diplomatic missions of the USA, the EU countries, Lithuania and Latvia visited the memorial to commemorate the Jews killed in Minsk ghetto. No representatives of Belarus official authorities were noticed speaking at the meeting.

On ***2 March*** Piershamaiski Borough Court of Minsk ruled to drop charges against Anatol Shumchanka. Shumchanka heads the NGO Perspective, a union of private entrepreneurs who are fighting for their rights. The judge did not find corpus delicti in Shumchanka's actions. Shumchanka was charged under Article #167.1-1 part 2 of the Code of Administrative Offences (violation of order of carrying out mass actions) for organization of the unauthorized meeting, which allegedly took place on 24 February at Uruchcha-3 market. Aliaksandr Halieu was Shum-chanka's attorney in court.

On ***3 March*** Viasna learned that local authorities of Brest and Hrodna regions started to collect information about sellers of independent newspapers. Uladzimir Ianukievich, senior editor of Liakhavitski Chas and Intex-Press (Baranavichy), and Andrei Shantarovich, senior editor of Mestnaya Gazeta (Vaukavysk) received «requests for information» about legal entities and private entrepreneurs who distribute the newspaper. Liakhavichy and Vaukavysk district executive committees were guided by the orders of regional executive committees to collect the necessary information by 1 March. The letters also contained references to presidential decree #516 of 24 September 2001, according to which the Ministry of Justice was made responsible for the state regulation of the information spread. Mikalai Kulitski, vice-chair of Liakhavichy DEC assured that the request concerned not only independent, but also state editions, such as Liakhavitski Vesnik newspaper. Iryna Karamyshava, lawyer of Belarusian Association of Journalists, thusly commented on the situation: "First of all, according to Article #13 of the Constitution, the state guarantees the freedom of business activity that doesn't contradict to the law. Secondly, according to Article #58 of the Constitution, nobody can be forced to execute the duties, not provided by the law. Presidential decree #516 and the Ruling on the Ministry of Information really obliged it to control the transmission and distribution of information. Nevertheless, this function doesn't mean the total control of the subjects of economy that distribute periodicals. The law doesn't impose such functions on the local authorities. Besides, the letters received by the editorial boards contain no explanations of the necessity to receive such information.»

On ***3 March***, during the sitting of the pro-governmental Belarusian National Youth Union (BRSM) at Baranavichy Light Industry College the leader of the college's BRSM unit Mikita Sasim, who initiated the unit's joining to the opposition Zubr movement, was deprived of his seat. According to Sasim, the sitting didn't have the quorum (40 persons present against 60 necessary). He considered the sitting ineligible and left it.

On ***3 March*** Hrodna businessman Dzmitry Ivanouski went on hunger-strike. Dzmitry Ivanouski was sentenced to 10 days of arrest for organization of a «Silent meeting» of businessmen which took place on 1 March near the regional executive committee.

Dzmitry Ivanouski didn't attend the action. On its eve the police detained him with the fly-sheets with invitations to the action. Hrodna Kastrychnitski Borough Court fined him for the fly-sheets. After the action Hrodna Leninski Police Board charged him with the organization of the action. On 3 March Natallia Koziel, judge of Hrodna Leninski Borough Court found him guilty of it and punished with 10 days in jail, so he went on hunger-strike of protest.

On ***3 March*** publicity was given to a document that recommended the local authorities to increase the control of activity of religious orga-nizations. The document was signed by Uladzimir Lameka, vice-head of the Committee on religious and national affairs. At present not only independent specialists, but a number of commissions monitor the activity of religious organizations in every region of Belarus with the aim to control the execution of the law on religious freedom. Uladzimir Lameka empha-sized that these commissions must activate their work on normalization of the religious situation in the country. The commissions must more attentively control congregations of different confessions, especially protestant and catholic ones — regularly visit religious services and meet with the authorities of religious organizations. The local administ-rations also must check the activity of unregistered religious organiza-tions: in these cases the commissions have the right to prohibit services, educational work, etc. According to the Committee on religious and national affairs, the commissions must pay especial attention to the usage of foreign languages during services — preference must be given to Belarusian and Russian.

On ***4 March*** Minsk Leninski Borough Court decided to exact 15 million rubles from Narodnaia Volia newspaper in favor of the businessman Siarhiei Atroshchanka as compensation of moral harm. Judge Viera Tupik obliged the editorial board of the newspaper to disprove the information, published in the article "What business feels well in Belarus?" in two-weeks' term and pay 165 thousand rubles of court expenditures and 700 thousand rubles for the legal services of the plaintiff. Narodnaia Volia intended to complain to Minsk City Court against this verdict.

On ***4 March*** it became known that Natallia Akaronka, deputy of Be-laaziorsk Town Deputy Soviet, can be found guilty of the case when her husband Iauhien Akaronka (chair of the town organization of Belarusian Social Democratic Party "Narodnaia Hramada") was beaten and hospitalized. The procurator's office brought a criminal case on this event. At the same time, Belaaziorsk police investigates into the details of the fight. The preliminary conclusions are that Natallia Akaronka (who also suffered because of the beating) could be punished. It is not the first trouble for her in 2004. In January she was

fired from local school for participation in the session of Belaaziorsk Town Soviet, initiated by opposition. The authorities boycotted this session and waited till the repeated election, when opposition activists lost their seats at the soviet.

On ***4 March*** it became known that Iakau Hutman, leader of the World Association of Belarusian Jews moved from Belarus to the US in protest against the policy of the state anti-Semitism exercised by the present authorities of Belarus. He stated he would remain a citizen of Belarus, but would live in New-York till the political situation in the country changed. According to Mr. Hutman, there was a Belarusian Jewish community in New-York with the aid of which he intended to apply to the US authorities with the request to defend the heritage of his people in Belarus.

On ***4 March*** Minsk Leninski Borough Court reconsidered the admi-nistrative case against Uladzimir Labkovich, lawyer of Human Rights Center Viasna. Judge Aliena Tsierashkova fined him.

On ***5 March*** Hrodna City Executive Committee refused to register Ratusha regional development fund. The applicants were members of the liquidated public association Ratusha. The official reason for the refusal was that the documents that were submitted for registration, contained mistakes.

On ***5 March*** about 20 activists of the United Civil Party handed thousands of fly-sheets “Five steps to better life” to workers of Minsk Car Factory.

On ***5 March*** the administration of Baranavichy Light Industry College started to pressurize the students who had joined the youth movement Zubr. Despite this, the students continued to protest. As a result, the administration used black PR against the movement. One of the college students said: “In the college we are told that Zubr is a fascist organi-zation, that its members dig graves and use them as lavatories and that parents put hot needles under the nails of their children, sluice them with cold water in frosty weather and then sluice down from bergs”. Zubr graffiti and fly-sheets started to appear in Baranavichy.

On ***5 March*** fifteen students of Baranavichy Light Industry College were driven to Belarusian TV. Before that they were instructed to publicly condemn the action of the BRSM members who joined Zubr and present it as a provocation.

On ***5-6 March*** 10 activists of Zubr were detained. Two more were detained on 8 March, including the chair of local BRSM organization Mikita Sasim. The police called different reasons for the detentions: from the need to check documents on suspicion in felonies. On 7 March the police took fingerprints from 3 detained Zubr activists and shot

them with video camera. Then the reports for violation of Article #167.10 of the Code of Administrative Offences were drawn on them (activity on behalf of unregistered organization). All in all, 15 Zubr activists were detained in Baranavichy on 5-8 March.

On ***6 March*** at the Congress of FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights with the head-quarters in Paris) it was decided to accept Human Rights Center Viasna into associated members. FIDH is one of the most influential human rights organizations, established in 1922. Among its members there are 116 human rights organizations from more than 100 countries of the world. The congress took place on 2-6 March in Quito, capital of Equador and was opened by the FIDH chair Sidiki Kaba and Shirin Ebadi, Nobel prize-winner on human rights from Iran. The lawyer of HRC Viasna Valiantsin Stefanovich attended the congress. He said: "Joining FIDH is an event of great importance for Viasna. First of all, it is the recognition of our active work. We were accepted despite the fact that our organization had been liquidated by court and only a registered organization could be a FIDH member. They decided to make an exception for Viasna, taking into account the situation in Belarus."

On ***6 March*** the issue of the Zgoda weekly was resumed after a month's suspension. The editorial board of the newspaper reacted to the admonitions of the Ministry of Information, as which gave the grounds to suspend the edition. The newspaper issue was printed in Plutos-market printing house and distributed by Belsaiuzdruk state net. On 5 February the Ministry of Information suspended the issue of the non-state newspaper "Zgoda" for one month. The editorial board was charged with changing of its legal address without informing the Ministry of Information (Article #11 of the Law on press) and issuing the newspaper only in Russian and Belarusian, not all the languages that are mentioned in its registration certificate. The founder of the newspaper Aliaksiei Karol functioned as its editor in the capacity of a private businessman whereas in its issue data some other person, Alies Sdvizhkou, was mentioned, (violation of articles #19 and #20 of the Law on press). During the suspension month the editorial board of the newspaper applied to the Ministry of Information with the request to introduce changes to its registration certificate concerning the legal address and the languages. It also made its issue data conform to the present legislation. At present the senior editor of the newspaper is A. Karol. The Zgoda newspaper has been issued since 1992. It is registered as an independent informational and analytical weekly. In 2003 the edition grew in volume and circulation: 16 pages instead of 8 with the circulation of 3 050 copies against the previous circulation of 2 500.

On ***8 March*** Hrodna trade union activist Ivan Raman was beaten on his way home. Strangers hit him in the head, and he fainted. He came to his senses in 30 minutes on a wasteland somewhere in the outskirts of the city. He had bruises on the face, a disjointed shoulder and a smashed knee. In November 2003 Ivan Raman was fired from Hrodna Aggregates Factory for his trade union activities.

On ***9 March*** the Zubr activists Andrei Chyzh, Katsiaryna Kiu and Mikita Sasim were detained while handing out newspapers at Baranavichy Light Industry College. The police drew up reports for violation of Article #156 of the Code of Administrative Offences (small disorderly conduct). At about 5 p.m. the youngsters were taken to court, but weren't tried and had to spend the night in cells.

On ***9 March*** the office of Dzmitry Salauiou, representative of Human Rights Center Viasna in Navapolatsk, was visited by the workers of the city tax inspection A. Ialovik and L. Kadushka. They had the order for raid check-up and intended to check "activity connected with acceptance of cash from customers (clients), production of goods, offering services", etc. Dzmitry Salauiou refused to let them in. He said he didn't deal with any kind of commercial activity and made no financial operations in the flat. He also presented to them the documents that confirmed his words. As a result the tax inspection officers composed to "Act of visit to Mr. Salauiou D.S." It is not the first attempt to pressurize the human rights activist. Before that he had been summoned to the police and the procurator's office and was warned about the possibility of punishment for activity on behalf of an unregistered (liquidated) organization.

On ***9 March*** the activists of Zubr movement Raman Kazakievich, Liubou Kuchynskaia and Nasta M. were detained in Minsk for handing out newspapers at Belarusian State University. The police were called by the internal guards of the university. The girls were let go and Raman Kazakievich was taken to the police station in Babruiskaia Street.

On ***10 March*** it became known that Vitsiebsk schoolchildren were made to subscribe to state editions. The list of the editions, recommended by the education boards included Sovetskaya Belorussiya and the official city newspaper Vitsbichy. All of the recommended editions were in Russian. In one of Vitsiebsk schools children were ordered even to collect money for subscription to Belaruskaia Dumka magazine that used to be issued under the title Kommunist Belorussii. There's no doubt 6-9-year old children would be able to read it.

On ***10 March*** Baranavichy City Court sentenced the activists of the Zubr movement Mikita Sasim and Andrei Chyzh to 10 and 7 days in jail respectively for spreading

newspapers in Baranavichy Light Industry College. The judge refused to provide them with legal defense services.

On ***10 March*** the authorities of the Union of Churches of Evangelic Baptist Christians submitted a note of protest against violations of believers' rights to Aliaksandr Lukashenka and other officials. They Union demanded from the authorities to amend the Law on freedom of conscience and religious organization because of the numerous facts of interference with the activity of protestant churches ensuing from it. Members of the union of Evangelic churches called the law on freedom of conscience and religious organizations hostile to their confession. They stated that their collective note of protest was the last attempt to prove it to the supreme country's authorities. This statement was enhanced with numerous examples. Mikhail Sinkaviets, chair of the Union: "A group of people were fined in Navahradak for praying in a private house". We complained to the court, but it only confirmed the lawfulness of these actions. The local police inspector and other officials came to our people in Shchuchyn when they celebrated Christmas and warned them. In Kobryn district all pupils of general schools were questioned whether they visited religious studies and were asked to call the surnames of their teachers. It is evident interference with the internal church affairs." To escape such problems, protestant believers demanded to change the law in the part that regulates the territory for the activity of protestant churches, the places of services, the conditions for the registration of primary units and also limit the rights of the control organs. The union authorities also asked Aliaksandr Lukashenka for a meeting in order to discuss other problems. They stated that all their appeals to different state organs were fruitless.

On ***10 March*** about 50 people participated in the "Stop Lukamol!" action in the center of Barysau. The action participants protested against forced membership in pro-Lukashenka BRSM. The Zubr activists wrote a huge "STOP Lukamol!" slogan on the snow in front of Barysau BRSM Committee and burnt fly-sheets with BRSM symbols on. After the action the police detained Dzmitry Barodka, Ihar Liednik and Aliaksandr Monich. They were charged with violation of Art 167-1 of the Code of Administ-rative Offences.

On ***11 March*** the riot squad police detained the Zubr activist Ivan Vasikau while he was handing out Supratsiu newspaper near Kastrych-nitskaia tube station. Ivan Vasikau was taken to Minsk Tsentralny Borough Board of Internal Affairs. There the police drew a report for distribution of printed editions without issue data.

On ***11 March*** the College Board of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Belarus, presided by the judge Iakhnavets, considered the complaint of Independent Society for Legal Research against its liquidation by Minsk City Court on 29 February, initiated by the

justice board of Minsk City Executive Committee. The justice board was represented by A. Shcharbovich. The ISLR position was convincingly elucidated by the organization chair Aliena Tankachova and its lawyer Aliesia Vidruk. Despite of the weighty arguments of ISLR the College Board ruled to leave the decision of Minsk City Court in force. It only changed the reason for the liquidation – "violation of the territory of the activity" instead of "representation of the interests of NGOs at trials" stated by Minsk City Court. Representatives of Belarusian NGOs, Minsk OSCE office and mass media came to support the organization. We should remind that the court verdict on its liquidation was issued under Article #29 of the Law on pubic associations – "repeated violation committed within a year's tern after a warning". Motivating his decision, in the operative part of the verdict the court stated that in 2003 representatives of Independent Society for Legal Research took part in the trials at Hrodna Regional Court (liquidation of Hrodna regional public association Ratusha, the refusal to register the public association Human Rights House in Smarhon) and Vitsiebsk Regional Court (liquidation of the public association Center of Youth Initiatives Contour. These very actions were found eligible for liquidations.

On ***11 March*** the chair of the Constitutional Court Ryhor Vasilievich gave publicity to the conclusion, according to which the court considers it possible to introduce the moratorium on death penalty or completely refuse from it. He added that it was in the competency of the head of the state and the Parliament to take this decision. On hearing it, the initiator of the inquiry to the Constitutional Court Andrei Nareika said: "Of course, I am satisfied. I think that it is the best decision. I think it is necessary to apply to the Chamber of Representatives within the framework of the verdict of the Constitutional Court and ask them for amendment of the Criminal Court. The question is whether my colleagues in parliament will support me." So, on 11 March there appeared juridical grounds for the introduction of the moratorium or complete abolition of death penalty. It's worth mentioning that according to the results of the so-called referendum of 1996 80% of the population voted against the abolishment of the death penalty. On the other hand, the conclusion of the Constitutional Court reads that, first of all, the voting was only of recommending nature and, secondly, at that time Belarusian legislation didn't have such a weighty alternative to it as life sentence. According to the law, the decisions of the Constitutional Court are final and can't be complained against. What would happen if the majority of the MPs don't support the court conclusion? Mikhail Pastukhou, member of the Constitutional Court of the 1st Convocation, professor, doctor of juridical science, said: "The question can be solved only in case Lukashenka agrees to it. Moreover, if he personally initiates this question, it can be solved."

On ***12 March*** Alieh Alkaieu former head of Minsk Investigative Isolator who headed the command that executed death punishments for five years, said how the death punishments were executed. Belarusian public found that he headed the "fusillade crew" only when he received political asylum in Germany. Alkaieu is not proud of the fact that he had occupied this seat. He thinks that death punishment is inhuman and harmful in all respects. He gave the following information about the way the death sentences are executed in Belarus. "In accordance with the Criminal Code, a convict is led into a special room where the presidential order to reject the clemency application in case the convict submitted it or about the non-use of clemency and then in 30 seconds – 1 minute the person is gone. We do everything to save the convict of additional sufferings. He hopes he would be driven somewhere. In reality, he is suddenly shot in the head in the room next door. After it the doctor registers death and the body is buried". The relatives don't receive the bodies and aren't even informed about the place of burials. Alieh Alkaieu is sure that it is inhuman, even towards those who execute the punishments, who suffer even more because of this secrecy: "For us it is double trouble, really." We need to drive out in strict confidence and hide everything so that no one could see and guess. It is quite difficult and reminds of a detective story, as if it is a mafia murder, not execution of the death penalty. Everything is done as if we were criminals". Alieh Alkaieu also said that a considerable part of the policemen who executed death punishments became chronic dipsomaniacs and almost all of them die quite early. The reason is a strong psychological stress they expe-rience and the absence of the system of medical rehabilitation: "Those who execute death punishments incur great psychical losses. We have no means of rehabilitation other than alcohol." Moreover, one feels nothing but misery when seeing the convicts in the moment of the sen-tence execution." Alieh Alkaieu is sure that it is necessary to abolish death penalty in Belarus and upholds the urgent moratorium to it: "Belarus is not the country of the most terrible criminals and my opinion is – the sooner the death penalty is abolished the better. Moreover that it has no upbringing functions, because everything is done secretly. Many people still think that there are no fusillades, people are secretly taken somewhere for plastic operation, transplantation of organs, etc."

On ***12 March*** Aliaksandr Monich, leader of Barysau Zubr, was fired from Barysau Assemblies Factory for participation in "STOP Lukamol!" action.

On ***12 March*** the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus, the government and the union of employers signed the general cooperation treaty for 2004-2005 without consideration of the proposals submitted by independent trade unions.

On ***15 March*** the Zubr activists Aliaksiei Liaukovich, Mikita Sasim and Nasta Vasilienka were to have been tried. On 8 March they were detained by the police for wearing badges with Zubr logo and charged with violation of Article #167.10 of the Code of Administrative Offences (activity on behalf of unregistered organization). Judge Mikalai Kmita sent the report back to the police for further procession. By the way, this very judge had sentenced Mikita Sasim to 10 days in jail. Mikita was driven back to the ward where he was kept under arrest.

On ***15 March*** the members of Conservative Christian Party BPF Uladzimir Plieshchanka and Aliaksandr Salauian came to their usual «Monday-action». Aliaksandr Salauian held the poster «If you went to the polls – you would support the regime» and Uladzimir Plieshchanka – «Collection of signatures against the alliance treaty with Russia, illegally signed by Aliaksandr Lukashenka». The police detained them near Vitsiebsk Regional Executive Committee and Vitsiebsk Chyhunachny Borough Court warned them.

On ***16 March*** the commission on affairs of under-aged persons of Baranavichy Main Board of Internal Affairs summoned Zubr activist Siarhiei Palishchuk. He was detained the night before on suspicion in making graffiti.

On ***16 March*** all higher educational establishments of Belarus (private and state ones) included the obligatory subject "Fundamentals of the ideology of Belarusian state" into their curriculum. The course comprises 24 sessions (16 lectures and 8 seminars). In the end the students have to pass credits on it.

On ***17 March*** the Procurator's General office instigated criminal proceedings against Anatol Liabiedzka, chair of United Civil Party. The criminal action was initiated after analysis of Liabiedzka's interview broadcast on 21 February by the Zerkalo program on RTR and on 22 February by Namedni program of NTV Russian channels. The criminal action is instigated under Article #367 part 2 of the Criminal Code (slandering the president of the Republic of Belarus"), which provides up to 5 years in jail as punishment. The case is sent to Minsk Procurator's Office for investigation.

On ***16 March*** the Zubr activists Dzmitry Shchepau and Nasta Vasilienka were detained at Baranavichy Light Industry College for handing out the second issue of Zubr-Baranavichy informational bulletin to students. The police drew on them reports for violation of Article #167-10 of the Code of Administrative Offences (activity on behalf of unregistered organization) and then drove the detainees to Baranavichy City Court. The trial lasted for half an hour. Judge Kuchyieva fined the activists.

On ***17 March*** vice-chair of OSCE mission in Minsk was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus. The ministry expressed its dissent with the participation of the head of the office in a conference organized by the Latvian government. The secretary of the OSCE press-service Heidi Smith informed journalists about it and stated that Eberhard Heiken will continue to take part in such actions.

On ***17 March*** Homiel Regional Economic Court suspended the consideration of the women's association Initiative against the refusal of Homiel District Executive Committee to register its legal address in the village of Iaromina.

On ***17 March*** the officer of Homiel Chyhunachny Borough Court Siarhiei Tsiatsiera seized property of Iryna Makavietskaia, reporter of Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta in Homiel region. He executed the decision of Minsk Kastrychnitski Borough Court of 1 October 2003 to exact from the journalist 300 000 BYR in favor of investigator of the Procurator's General Office Viachaslau Tsierakhovich. The court officer seized the furniture and some other things in the journalist's flat and valued them 410 thousand rubles. The total sum that he was to exact from her was 500 thousand rubles, because together with the compensation the journalist was to pay 82 thousand rubles of the state fee and 5% of the state fee for the forcible execution of the verdict and pay to the porters for the transportation of the confiscated items." The investigator sued Makavietskaia for a number of articles about investigation of the criminal case of Homiel Medical Institute rector Iury Bandazheuski and Vice-rector Uladzimir Raukou published by the BDG in 2001-2002. He demanded from the defendant to disprove the information and to give him 10 million rubles to compensate the moral harm. The trial lasted for more than a year.

On ***17 March*** the Department for Financial Investigations of the State Control Committee instigated proceedings against chairperson of Belarusian Helsinki Committee Tatsiana Protska and its accountant Tatsiana Rudkievich. They are accused of failure to pay BHC taxes (in the amount of about 180 000 USD) during 2000-2003 for activities in the framework of TACIS program. Before that, the BHC activity was checked up by a tax inspection committee which considered that the organization was to pay 375 million rubles together with the fee for the failure to timely pay the taxes.

At about 10 p.m. on 18 March the attempt to get into the office of Den newspaper was stopped by the police patrol, called by a passer-by. According to the preliminary information, the persons who attempted to get in, were workers of Hrodna Regional KGB.

On ***18 March*** at Minsk City Procurator's Office Anatol Liabiedzka was given the ruling for the initiation of the criminal case against him for "distribution of knowingly false information insulting to president of the Republic of Belarus in mass media, accompanied with accusations in felonies". Anatol Liabiedzka stated that in the case the case was passed to the court, he could present evidence that the information he had given publicity to at Zerkalo program of the Russian RTR TV channel was true.

On ***16 March*** property of Will for Development NGO (Slonim) was seized. On 12-16 March tax inspection carried out an unscheduled check-up of the NGO which worked on a TACIS program. Inspectors allegedly found out the NGO failed to pay taxes. The same day Belarusian TV accused Mikhail Varaniets, head of the organization, of violation of the tax legislation.

On ***19 March*** it was found that the KGB workers who were detained in the evening of 18 March and introduced themselves as Aliaksandr Vashkievich and Viktar Makarau, were released from Hrodna Leninski Borough Board of Internal Affairs. The duty officials didn't comment on the fact that the people caught in the act of a crime were let go.

On ***19 March*** Hrodna police refused to bring a criminal case on the fact of the attempt of getting into Den newspaper office.

On ***22 March*** the authorities of Belaaziorsk prohibited a seminar, devoted to reformation of the housing economy. The reason was that the seminar was initiated by opposition deputies of the local deputy soviet.

22 March brought the first victims of the total transfer to the contract system of employment. The administration of Navapolatsk heating station warned the leaders of the local trade union organization that it wouldn't prolong the contract to them. The chair of the organization Vadzim Dukhamienka and the members of the trade union Iury Abukhau and Iury Haichanka received written warnings. All of them were experienced and qualified workers.

22 March the fresco in Bobr town church was damaged. The fresco was painted by the painter Alies Pushkin and contained two persons that looked like Lukashenka and Filaret, Belarusian metropolitan of Russian Orthodox Church, both being a part of the Biblical scene describing the terrible sufferings of sinners after death.

On ***22 March*** Katsiaryna Bankievich, activist of Zubr movement detained together with Mikita Sasim, was discussed at the pedagogical college of Baranavichy Light Industry College. It was decided to exclude the under-aged activist from the college in the case she continued her activity.

On ***23 March*** Slonim police detained representatives of the People's Coalition "5+": deputy head of Belarusian Party of Communists Aliena Skryhan, head of Belarusian People's Front Vintsuk Viachorka, and member of the United Civil Party Anatol Paulau. They arrived to Slonim on the invitation of local councilor Ivan Sheha, who was organizing a meeting with voters. It was planned to organize the meeting at school, but it was closed down. Then it was decided to hold it outdoors, on the benches of the school yard. As soon as guests from Minsk left the meeting, they were detained by the police and convoyed to the district board of internal affairs. The police detained them near the board for 2,5 hours, took the passports away and tried to pull into the building in order to compose the violation reports. Finally the police returned the passports but warned that the reports for violation of Article #167-1 of the Code of Administrative Offences (violation of the order of organization of meetings and assemblies) would be composed.

On ***23 March*** the Supreme Economic Court rejected the suit of Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta against the Ministry of Information. The journalists tried to complain against the warning issued by the ministry on 30 January.

On ***24 March*** about 60 pupils of Iakub Kolas Belarusian National Humanities Lyceum that had been closed by the authorities ranked along Frantysk Skaryna Avenue opposite Tsentralny supermarket, singing "Gaudeamus" and holding posters. The action ended with artistic performance in Gorky Park. During the action the police started to seize the posters. Then they detained Iury Hrynievich (father of the lyceum pupil Iauhien Hrynievich) for making photos and took him to Minsk City Police Board. People in plain clothes registered the action with video cameras. On the end of the performance the majority of lyceum pupils left the park. The police detained five girls from the lyceum – Tatsiana Abramchuk, Iulia Bandarenka, Adelia Dubaviets, Volga Kawaliova and Marylia Vasiuchenka and three more girls who watched the performance. In some time they released all the detainees.

On ***25 March*** members of Belarusian-European Association held a picket at the entrance of the building of the European Parliament in Brussels to celebrate the 86th anniversary of the declaration of Belarusian People's Republic. That day a sitting was held in the building, that's why the picket received a great public attention. During the talk between the picketers and the sitting participants it became known that the discussion about the quicker integration of Belarus into the EU became more active. The police of Brussels behaved friendly and demonstrated their understanding of the political situation in Belarus.

On ***25 March*** Aliena Kurylovich, court officer of Biaroza District Court, seized the property of Tamara Shchapiotkina, journalist of the regional Gazeta Dlya Vas.

At ***night of 24-25 March*** Zubr activists hang out white-red-white flags in the central streets of the city to celebrate the 86th anniversary of the declaration of Belarusian People's Republic.

On ***25 March*** the College Board for civil cases of Brest Regional Court composed of judges H. R. Dmitruk, N. S. Ustsimchuk, and N. S. Chebushava rejected the complaint filed by Nina Davydouskaia and left in force the ruling to fine Davydouskaia, issued by Brest Maskouski borough administrative commission on 19 December 2003. On 19 December 2003 Nina Davydouskaia was fined 49 000 BYR (about 25 USD) for violation of Article #172 part 3 of the Code of Administrative Offences for which the commission took handing out fly-sheets with congratulations on the International Day of Human Rights, 10 December. Nina Davydouskaia was accused in the fact that "near the entrance to Koleratron plant in Suvorau Street, 55 she spread leaflets produced in violation of the established procedure, without publisher information, which aimed at damaging the state and public order and legal interests of citizens".

On ***25 March*** the center of Minsk was crowded with police and special squad police officers looking for people with white-red-white flowers, and arresting them… First detentions occurred on Kastrychnitskaia Square. Dzianis Buinitski, Valiantsin Baranau, and Viachaslau Siuchyk held posters: "Long Live Belarusian People's Republic!", «Long Live Independent Belarus!», and «People Have the Right to Elect Authorities». To stay in the Square, they chained themselves to lampposts. However, the police unshackled them and took to Minsk Tsentralny Borough Board of Internal Affairs. «People in plain clothes» began to gather on Freedom Square around 5 p.m. One of them started to pick on a young guy wearing a camouflage shirt with white-red-white stripes on a sleeve. Other participants stood up for the guy. When more than 100 people gathered in the square, 4 people in plain clothes seized a man and forced him into a police car. People protested in vain. When head of Belarusian People's Front Vintsuk Viachorka and head of Viasna joined the action, three people in civil clothes suddenly attacked Bialiatski, knocked him off his feet and dragged to the car. Then they arrested Viachorka. Then special squad police officers started to «clean up» the square. Most of the crowd was forced out to Niamiha subway station. Others went along Internatsyanalnaia Street to the monument to Ianka Kupala. However, on the way to the monument some of them were detained. More than 10 people were taken to Tsentralny police station. After his release Vintsuk Viachorka told RFE/RL he met Russian special police officers in the police station who claimed they came to Minsk as trainees. Other action participants went to Kupala Park

where they put flowers to the monument of Belarusian poet Ianka Kupala and sang song. The celebration in Minsk was concluded with a literary soiree in the building of the Writers' Union. Pickets and rallies were held in all regional and most of the district centers of the country. Freedom Day was also celebrated by Belarusian in many European capitals.

On ***25 March*** in Freedom Square police detained participants of the Freedom Day – the 86th anniversary of the Belarusian People's Republic – celebration. The detained were taken to Minsk Tsentralny Borough Board of Internal Affairs. Among the detainees were:

1. Valiantsin Baranau;
2. Alies Bialiatski – chair Human Rights Center Viasna (during the detention he was knocked down and dragged to a police car);
3. Dzianis Buinitski;
4. Alieh Hniedchyk;
5. Uladzimir Kishkurna – chair of Minsk city organization of Belarusian People's Front;
6. Andrei Koziel – deputy head of Minsk city organization of United Civil Party (was severely beaten during the detention and in the police car);
7. Ryhor Kiiko;
8. Valiantsin Matskievich;
9. Viachaslau Siuchyk;
10. Iauhien Skochka;
11. Valiantsin Stefanovich – lawyer of Human Rights Center Viasna (was detained when he rushed to help Bialiatski)
12. Vintsuk Viachorka – chair of Belarusian People's Front.

Testimony of Andrei Koziel: "I came to Freedom Square at about 4.50 p.m. At that moment there were about 40 people who came to celebrate and about 40 agents in plain clothes. In a couple of minutes police colonel Hirel and two skin-headed people in plain clothes approached a group of teenagers (aged 14-16) and in an aggressive way demanded from them to leave the square. At this moment I came up to the colonel and asked what exactly he wanted and why he was bothering the young people. Than colonel Hirel tried to force me leave the square. I replied, as a citizen of the Republic of Belarus I could stay wherever and whenever I wanted. The officer started to yell in dirty language and ordered his two skin-headed assistants to grab me. They immediately twisted my arms and led me to a police car. At that moment many people noticed the incident and

surrounded us. Journalists came closer and asked Hirel about the reason for my detention. Hirel could not give a clear answer and they had to let me go. In about 5 minutes a special police squad arrived from Internatsyanalnaia Street. They lined up in a chain and, looking like members of punitive action group during the fascist occupation, advanced to the people. They walked up to the people sitting on benches who possibly had nothing to do with the action and made them leave the square. At this moment I sat down on the ground to show resistance. I kept sitting until three special squad police officers forced me to stand up twisting my arms. After 10 meters they turned me over to the skin-headed people who had detained me earlier. They led me in the direction of Niamiha subway station to an special squad police van. On the way to the van, the shorter person gave me seVieral kicks to the stomach. In the van they started to senselessly beat me in the face, kidneys, stomach, and arms. They beat me quite brutally and the shorter officer repeated all the time: “You don’t know what we did with guys like you in Chechnya…“. In some time they got even madder and started to tear off stripes with Belarusian white-red-white flag and symbols from my clothes. After that the shorter guy left the van and I never saw him again. The taller young guy stayed in the van and kept muttering that the opposition is rubbish, etc. In a couple of minutes they brought Viera, a middle-aged woman, to the van. She was detained for putting flowers on the special squad police van. She said she wanted to take the strain off the situation. Different people called me on the mobile phone and when I told a journalist I had been beaten, the skin-head took my phone away. In 5 minutes special police squad officers arrived and took me to another van. There was a special police squad officer who kept talking what a good government we have and that the people are absolutely happy about it. In 5 minutes we arrived to Tsentralny Borough Board of Internal Affairs. They took me to the hall, where I saw about 15 other people who had been detained, well-known people as Viachorka and Stefanovich among them. Then I had to write an explanation of the events on the Square.

At about 7.50 p.m. they released me. I went out of the police building. It was quite hard to move and breathe. I had only one thought on my mind: Tomorrow I will undergo medical examination and register the injuries”.

On ***25 March*** the police detained 7 participants of unauthorized action in Salihorsk. On 26 March they were tried. BPF activists Andrei Liapa-novich, Dzmitry Tychyna and head of Salihorsk branch of CCP (Conservative Christian Party) Alieh Boryn were fined 25 and 20 basic units (160 and 200 USD). College student Volha Kurlovich and handicapped Ihar Khamienka were officially warned. BPF activist Ihar Kazakou and UCP activist Andrei Nahorny refused to plead guilty and were fined 100 basic units (815 USD) each.

In the ***night of 27-28 March*** unknown individuals attacked and robbed the church of Evangelical Faith Christians located in Khatsislau village, Malaryta district. The strangers smashed the panes in the building, and stole a clock, literature and stationery of the Sunday school, and a film projector. The attack on the church was reported to police. Police investigates the case. Since the purchase of the building in 2000 and the beginning of regular services twice a week, this is the sixth attack on the building. In seVieral cases these attacks were an obvious vandalism, when offenders spilled paint on the church benches, pulpit, and floor. "Two years ago, — says Pastor Viachaslau Rahatsievich, — a similar case occurred, but offenders were not found. The investigative lead is, that offenders are religious people, because the only valuable untouched and left in the church was a chalice and Eucharist dishes with the image of crucifix. However, the committed attack is obvious evidence that somebody does not like the presence of the Protestant believers and their church in Khatsislau, and that the attacks are intentional."

On ***26 March*** the administration of Polatsk heating station fired Alieh Shaitar, chair of the local Free Trade Union organization. The formal reason for dismissal was 'failure to perform duties of equipment testing'.

On ***28 March*** the customs officers detained the Young Front activist Dzmitry Dashkievich at the frontier outpost "Kamienny Loh" for three hours and confiscated from him some documents and agitation materials.

On ***29 March*** Alies Bialiatski, chairperson of Human Rights Center Viasna, was summoned to the Procurator's General Office. Procurator Novikau dealing with the issues of NGOs, political parties, religious organizations and mass media, desired to have an unofficial 'conversation' with Bialiatski. The conversation was short, nothing was recorded. The procurator asked seVieral questions about Bialiatski's activity in non-governmental sector: what NGOs he was a member of, whether he was linked to the Assembly of Democratic NGOs and to its magazine. Prosecutor Novikau was especially interested how often Bialiatski traveled abroad and what money he was living on. Bialiatski answered that according to Article #27 of the Constitution he has the right not to provide information which can be used against him. The procurator replied that he still might find a string he would be able to pull and their conversation would continue. Before that the procurator had called seVieral people who belonged to the editorial board of Asamblieia magazine and interrogated them about the magazine. In Bialiatski's case the procurator asked questions about much broader circle of issues, including personal life, undoubtedly exceeding his power. Bialiatski thinks the main reason for the

conversation which took place is general pressure on NGOs which has become a lot stronger.

On ***29 March*** Amnesty International said publishing its report Belarus: Stifling the promotion of human rights. A disturbing number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), directly and indirectly engaged in the promotion and defense of human rights in Belarus, have been closed on the basis of controversial legislation and regulations, widely considered as restrictive, by a judiciary whose independence has been repeatedly called into question by the international community «A next target seems to be internet-based publications, one of the only media outlets currently able to function more or less independently, Amnesty International warned.

On ***30 March*** the Internet site of the International League for Human Rights belarusupdate.org published an exclusive interview with Christos Pourgourides – member of the Council of Europe, author of the report on the missing leaders of Belarusian opposition. According to Mr. Pourgourides, the greatest obstacle during the investigation was the impossibility to meet with certain persons, who had relations to the case. Characterizing the general situation of Belarusian mass media, Mr. Pourgourides pointed out: "At present one must have much courage to work in Belarusian independent media … My opinion is that as long as the international community attentively watches the events in Belarus, the regime won't be able to repeat what happened to Zavadski. But car accidents …. or heart attacks can happen…» In the end of the interview Christos Pourgourides said he was sure in the necessity of sanctions against Belarusian regime.

At the end of March all information boards of regional, city and borough executive committees, as well as district administrations were turned into the boards and departments of ideological work. This information was confirmed in seVieral regional executive committees at once. The changes were made in conformity with presidential order #111 On development of the staff regulation of the ideological work in the Republic of Belarus, signed in February. If the information departments belonged to the system of the Ministry of Information, the new ideological structures are subordinated to the Presidential Administration. The executive committees were to adopt the structure and the staff of the ideological department workers by 1 April "with respect to the number of the population", but "within the general number of workers". As a result the people, who used to work in the information boards, became workers of the ideological departments. Earlier the activity of the information boards of the regional executive committees was regulated by the ruling of Ministry of Information that was adopted on 10 December 2002. After the issue of decree #111 this document actually stopped acting. Besides, some parts of order #94 (issued by the Ministry of Information on 27 May 2003) became

invalid, because according to this order the appointment of information departments of the regional executive committees was to be agreed with the Minister of Information. At present the Presidential Administration appoints the heads of the ideological work boards of the regional executive committees and Minsk City Executive Committee. In their turn, the candidatures of the ideological departments of local executive organs are agreed with the regional executive committees. The candidatures had to be agreed till 1 May. The order for appointment on the state mass media changed in the same way. The potential heads of the national and regional mass media (with the exception of those appointed by president in person) have to be agreed with the Presidential Administration. Regional executive committees agree the candidatures of the local mass media, founded by city, district, borough executive committees and local administrations.

APRIL

On ***2 April*** Tsentralny Borough Court of Minsk received a complaint against Lieanid Ieryn, head of the Belarusian KGB. The complaint was signed by families of the abducted opposition figures: Zinaida Hanchar, Iryna Krasouskaia, Sviatlana and Volha Zavadskis. Human rights defender Alieh Volchak, representative of Volha Zakharanka, signed the complaint on her behalf. The authors of the complaint ask the court to institute proceedings against Ieryn for covering up a crime. They believe, Lieanid Ieryn does not perform his duty to disclose the crimes against Viktar Hanchar, Anatol Krasouski and Iury Zakharanka. At the end of January the families of the disappeared opposition figures addressed the KGB with the request to launch investigation into Hanchar, Krasouski, Zakharanka, and Zavadski disappearance cases earlier investigated by the Procurator's General Office. The relatives argued the procurator's office investigators had no chances to discover the truth for many reasons, including the fact that according to them one of the main suspects is the acting Procurator General Viktar Sheiman. However, the families of the disappeared have never got any reply from the KGB. The families' representative Hary Pahaniaila insisted that the request has been filed to KGB and registered according to the procedure. The KGB should have reacted one month ago. Hary Pahaniaila believed the KGB failed to instigate the action. The families of the disappeared plan to sued the top Belarusian officials suspected of crime cover-up in international court. They seem to have already chosen a court in one of the European countries. However, potentialities to find the truth in Belarus have not yet been exhausted.

On ***2 April*** the Polish Embassy in Belarus made a statement regar-ding the broadcast of "Human Rights – A Glance at the World" show by the Belarusian National TV channel. "The Belarusian state TV has put in the mouth of its notorious propagandist Iauhien Novikau ... an insult to Polish people and authorities having called the Republic of Poland, Belarus' closest neighbor, a "puppet state", — claimed the diplomats. The statement stressed, the TV show was broadcast "the day Belarusian prime-minister Siarhiei Sidorski was receiving the Polish Ambassador, and the same TV channel presented it as the political event of the day". The Polish Embassy reminded that "Poland is a country with democratically-elected authorities, it is a long-standing full member of the Council of Europe, and a country where residents of even the smallest towns and villages have direct and exclusive impact on their local representatives and decision-making on their behalf. Eventually, Poland is a country implementing independent foreign policy". The declarers believe, presenting Poland as a '' puppet state" was nothing but slander. "A puppet figure is certainly the journalist who seems to perform a political order of the circles interested in falling off in cooperation between Poland and Belarus'". ''From the

standpoint of these events we consider Mr. Novikau not only as an instigator of hostility towards Polish people, but also as a provocateur acting directly against the policy of the Belarusian authorities who are trying to improve the climate of our bilateral relations". The Polish Embassy hopes that "scandalous statements of that kind will never be aired by Belarusian state TV".

On ***5 April*** the Justice Board of Homiel Regional Executive Committee refused to register the new regional public association Civil Alternative. It was founded by 200 citizens of the region. Most of them are members of the liquidated Civil Initiatives. The regional justice board was dissatisfied that the new association was going to join international organizations and deal with editorial activity. Another pretension concerned the semantic meaning of the words "humanitarian" and "humanistic". The justice board also considered as a huge mistake that the number of the room wasn't mentioned in the guarantee letter for the placement of the legal address. The board has taken no official decision concerning the registration for 3,5 months, though the law gave only 30 days for it. Uladzimir, Katsora, chair of the new association, had to submit an inquiry to the justice board and complain to the Procurator's Office of Belarus and the Ministry of Justice. The UN Committee on Human Rights accepted for consideration the complaint of the liquidated public association Civil Initiatives. The letter from Vienna informed the head of the Initiatives Viktar Karnienka that a copy of the complaint was directed to Belarusian government for consideration and the government would have to reply to the inquiry of the UN Committee within 6-months' term.

On ***5 April*** the French Ambassador to Belarus Stephane Chme-lewsky who also performs the functions of the local EU presidency on behalf of Ireland, addressed the host of "Human Rights. A Look at the World'' show of the Belarusian National Channel with an open letter. "My colleagues, ambassadors, heads of diplomatic missions of the European Union countries (Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Sweden), and the joining countries (Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, and Estonia), and I personally watch closely a series of " Human Rights. A Look at the World" show, — writes Chmelewsky. — I address you with this letter on their behalf as well'. "I would like you to know, — the diplomat appeals to the journalist, — that our astonishment is caused not by lies and perverted facts contained in your show. Wherever we perform our professional duties, on different geographic latitudes we come across propagandistic lies regardless of its political slant. What astonishes us is that now and today it is possible to display contempt for Belarusian TV viewers who are deceived with lies"'. Ambassador Chmelewsky referred to the show of 26 February, when TV host Novikau accused his compatriot, Secretary General of the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH)

Philippe Kalfayan of ′′incitement to allegedly armed resistance to human rights violations», what obviously does not represent the facts′′, — writes the Ambassador. "In your show you reproach me and ten of my colleagues with participation in the opening session of the international conference on human rights and call upon the Foreign Ministry of Belarus to read us a serious lecture because you think our actions have allegedly broken the rules of diplomatic protocol". "And what an effort you have made to illustrate the above-mentioned statement and your appeal to the Foreign Ministry of your country! — continues Chmelewsky. — You turn to picture montage and use film footage recorded during other events. Besides that, the Ambassador thinks, Novikau made an ""absurd comparison" of the suicide of British weapons expert Kelly and «unclear disappearance′′ of Viktar Hanchar or Iury Zakharanka. «I would like to remind you that from the viewpoint of such foreign observers as us, maturity of opinions and ability to hold competent debate on any issue is typical of Belarusian auDence. Any journalist worthy of the name in such a country as yours, which borders on the enlarged European Union, should be more likely to promote such debates than waste time on the rhetoric left in the past, at least by the European countries neighboring Belarus», — concluded Ambassador Chmelewsky.

On ***5 April*** the justice department of Vitsiebsk city administration issued a written warning to Vieras youth non-governmental organization. The warning was made on the ground of the check-up, which continued for over 3 months. Officials mainly claim that according to its Statute, Vieras had no right to organize a roundtable on the issue of inter-ethnic relations in the region and had no right to do volunteer work. The above-mentioned event was held in Vitsiebsk on 3 December 2003 in the framework of the ′′Equality. Tolerance. Respect′′ project. The roundtable was attended by representatives of ethnic minorities, activists of local NGOs, and journalists. The participants analyzed inter-ethnic relations in Vitsiebsk and made proposals for improvement of the situation in this sphere. The event received wide coVierage in mass media. After the roundtable the city administration requested explanations from Vieras leadership. The information department officer Iryna Puchkova showed evident displeasure with some negative opinions about the situation of ethnic minorities in Vitsiebsk region voiced at the roundtable. Ms. Puchkova was especially annoyed by the statements of a teacher from Poland, who works in Vitsiebsk Polish House and is well aware of the situation of Polish minority in the region. The Justice department also claimed that Vieras violated the Law by creation of a Local Volunteer Center as an organization department. The Local Volunteer Center organizes young people for charitable and social work. «It's incomprehensible why the Justice department insists Vieras should close the Center

down', — said Vieras chairperson Iaraslau Mantsevich. Vieras planned to appeal to court against the warning.

On ***5 April*** the Ministry of Information warned the independent newspaper Mestnaya Gazeta for alleged violation of articles 11 and 26 of the Law on press and the failure to execute a number of demands to the newspaper layout. However, the main pretension of the ministry to the newspaper is the non-informing about the change in the periodicity of the newspaper issue (3 times per week instead of 2) and the wider spread of the newspaper – its distribution started in Vaukavysk, Masty, Svislach, Bierastavitsa, Zelva and Smarhon.

On ***5 April*** the leaders of Young Front held a press conference on KGB attempts to recruit youth for collaboration. P. Sieviaryniets and A. Shein drew many examples of this kind of activity and said that such attempts became more frequent.

On ***6 April*** Minsk Transport Procurator's Office brought a criminal case upon part 2 of article 367 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus – defamation of president, against Aksana Novikava who handed out fly-sheets about relation of the highest-level Belarusian officials to disappearances of politicians in Belarus. The case was brought by A. Lapshyn, transport procurator and justice advisor.

On ***6 April*** KGB tried to recruit Dzmitry Kukhliei, chair of Masty dist-rict organization of Young Front. On 21 March he was detained at the railway station of Lida. The police searched his belongings and confiscated a part of unregistered human rights edition. Soon two KGB workers invited him for a talk in a newspaper office. They paid interest to his political orientation and Young Front. According to Dzmitry Kukhlei, in the middle of the talk they proposed collaboration to him. Before that one of them took out the law on KGB activity and read excerpts from it: that everything was legal and he could collaborate with them on his own free will. The guy answered he wouldn't do it.

On ***6 April*** the Procurator's Office of the Republic of Belarus again suspended the criminal case concerning the kidnap of Dzmitry Zavadski on 7 July 2000. The decision to suspend the criminal case, signed by Ivan Branchel, chair of the investigation of organized crimes and corruption investigations at the Procurator's Office of the Republic of Belarus, reads: "the criminal case was suspended on 31 March due to the failure to find the missing person". It was not the first time when the case investigation was suspended. Last time it was renewed on 10 December 2003. Zavadski's relatives don't understand why then the authorities renewed the case on 10 December.

On ***6 April*** the Chain of Concerned People action took place in Kastrychnitskaia Square of Minsk. The police detained two people for handing out fly-sheets.

On ***6 April*** Uladzimir Lievanieuski, son of the head of the nationwide strike committee of Belarus Valiery Lievanieuski was detained for distribution of fly-sheets and “Predprinimatel” bulletin at Karona market by two persons in plain clothes who introduced themselves as the market guards, but showed no documents. U. Lievanieuski was taken to Hrodna Leninski Borough Board of Internal Affairs. The police confiscated the fly-sheets and drew a violation report.

In the evening of ***7 April*** the road police stopped the car of Mikhail Bielakoz who transported Den newspaper to Hrodna from Smolensk printing house to Hrodna, near the town of Iuie. The road police called the quick reaction group of Iue District Borough Board of Internal Affairs, who decided to detain 4 800 copies of the newspaper. The group workers composed only the report on the car examination and didn’t even specify the reason for the newspaper’s detention there. The worker of the department of organized crimes didn’t tell his surname. In an hour Belakoz was let go, without any documents about the detention of the newspaper. According to the duty policeman of Iue DBIA Niekviadovich, “4 800 copies of the newspaper were detained because of the doubt in the validity of the accompanying documents”. According to Mikola Markievich, senior editor of the newspaper, the documents conformed to all legal demands. The week before the circulation of the 10th issue of the newspaper was detained by Iuie road police as well, but the car was let go after an hour’s talk.

On ***6 April*** Minsk Transport Procurator’s Office summoned Aksana Novikava for preliminary interrogation. The investigator Iury Nadolski asked her who had produced the anti-presidential fly-sheets and where and how many fly-sheets she had. The criminal case was brought upon part 2 of article 367 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus – defamation of president. We should remind that in February 2004 the Committee on execution of punishments granted parole to Aksana Novikava, who was sentenced to two years in jail with the postponement of the sentence for two years for insult of president of Belarus.

At about 8 p.m. on ***8 April***, after the meeting of representatives of People’s coalition 5+ with the population in Hrodna the police detained the car that belonged to Uladzimir Chyrvonienka, chair of Hrodna Regional branch of United Civil Party. The police confiscated about 6 thousand fly-sheets “Five steps to better life” and calendars with 5+ logo. At Hrodna Leninski Borough Board of Internal Affairs the police calculated the fly-sheets and the calendars and composed a violation report.

On ***7 April*** N. Kachura, vice-director of Baranavichy Light Industry College, was fired from the college. The college director was rebuked. The college administration was punished because the college unit of BRSM had joined Zubr.

On ***8 April*** Navapolatsk authorities disrupted a meeting of Vintsuk Viachorka, chair of BPF Party, with students. The meeting was to have taken place in Iakub Kolas library in Minsk. Viachorka intend ed to lecture on problems of reformation of Belarusian orthography and the widening of the use of Belarusian language in modern circumstances.

On ***8 April*** about a dozen of activists of Free Trade Union of Belarus held an action of support to Viktar Stukau at the check-point of Polatskshklovalakno (Polatsk Fiberglass) factory. Having worked for 20 years at the factory as a workshop operator, Stukau was fired and, moreover, administratively punished.

On ***8 April*** the state register of the cinema and video films of the Ministry of Culture refused to issue the certificate for demonstration of the film "Long Road Home… Requiem" devoted to the life and work of the famous Belarusian writer Vasil Bykau. In their refusal the ministry officials stated that the film demonstration could have a negative influence on "moral and ethic fundamentals of the life of Belarusian people". The authors and the main characters of the film are sure that the real reason for the prohibition to show the film is that Belarusian authorities fear even the people's memory about Vasil Bykau, whom they haunted during his life.

On ***8 April*** Hrodna Leninski Borough Procurator's Office warned Aliena Raubietskaia, senior editor of Birzha Informatsii independent newspaper, for violation of article #5 of the Law on press. The senior editor was warned for alleged distribution of information on behalf of unregistered party structure in the newspaper issues of 29 February and 18 March. The articles "We don't limn on water" and "Knock-out in the first round" were written by the head of Hrodna regional branch of United Civil Party. The first article was devoted to the establishment of the party coalition 5+ and the second contained the author's impressions of the election in Russia. On 7 April Aliena Raubietskaia was summoned to procurator's office and informed about a check-up concerning the publication of the articles. The check-up was initiated by Hrodna Regional Procurator's Office that took the opinion that Birzha Informatsii distributed information on behalf of an unregistered structure. The investigation referred to the refusal of Hrodna Regional Executive Committee to register Hrodna UCP branch in 2003. A. Raubietskaia, in her turn, stated that the United Civil Party was registered by the Ministry of Justice and the local branches only needed to submit documents for registration to the local administrations.

She put these arguments down to the explanatory note that she took to the procurator's office on 8 April, but the procurator's office issued the warning before she came there. A. Rau¬bietskaia intended to complain to court against the warning.

On ***8 April*** the senior editor of Narodnaia Volia newspaper Iosif Siaredzich filed his answer to BelTA state agency where he said he was ready to consider its proposals concerning the TV diary of the nine programs in publication of which the editorial staff was interested (BelTA proposed to the publication only the TV diary of seVieral dozens of TV programs with preview at the cost of 5,025 million rubles. «As regards your statements that Narodnaia Volia repeatedly published TV diaries without conclusion of the appropriate agreement, I have to explain that it is not a violation of the present legislation of the Republic of Belarus. According to the law, the TV diaries and the information about the time of their broadcast are not subject to copyright. This information can be published in any newspapers for free in the case it is not accompanied with the artwork, secured with copyright (such as previews). That's why I consider your pretensions groundless", — is stated in the letter.

On ***9 April*** the police detained three Zubr activists in the center of Minsk. Raman Kazakievich and Kanstantsin L. were detained in Masherau Avenue while sticking posters to pillars. The under-aged Alieh Radziuk was detained at Pushkinskaia tube station for posting fly-sheets. The police drew a report for violation of Article #162 "Non-execution of parental duties". The same day in Baranavichy the police detained the Zubr activist Artur Haidukievich for wearing Zubr badge and composed a report under Article #167-2 of the Code of Administrative Offences (usage of unregistered symbols).

On ***9 April***, during the preparation to the session of the UN Commis-sion on Human Rights, representatives of a number of states proposed to introduce the post of the special rapporteur on human rights in Belarus. So, Belarus starts to be associated with such countries as Myanmar, Congo, Sierra-Leone, Cuba and Sudan, where human rights are totally violated.

On ***9 April*** Minsk Piershamaiski Borough Court rejected the complaint of the Board of Belarusian Helsinki Committee and its chair Tatsiana Protska against Belarusian State TV and Radio Company. The court decided that the company journalists didn't insult honor, dignity and business reputation of BHC members and "neutrally elucidated the problem". This decision was announced in the absence of the plaintiffs. The reason for the suit was the report about the life and activity of BHC, Tatsiana Protska and other human rights activists that was broadcast on 2 November 2003 in "In the center of attention» program. The defen-dants in the case were Siarhiei Khamiantouski, host of the

program, and the report's author Iury Prakopau. Judge Aniskevich decided that the information that was distributed in the program couldn't be found insulting, because they didn't contain direct insults of the plaintiffs, didn't violate "the norms of literary Russian language" and were just a "neutral expression of the journalists' opinion". Commenting on the results of the trial, the plaintiffs' representative Hary Pahaniaila stated that the court again executed the order of the authorities. The plaintiffs intended to complain to Minsk City Court against the verdict. "We must use all legal means and methods to defend our rights", — stated Hary Pahaniaila. Minsk Piershamaiski Borough Court also received one more suit – concerning the trespass of the private territory of Tatsiana Protska and her husband Dzmitry Kozyr during the production of the TV report about the profits of BHC workers and Protska's property, shown on 29 February.

On ***9 April*** Polatsk City Court warned the activists of Free trade union Uladzimir Antanovich and Viktar Stukau, who were detained on 8 April for unauthorized picket (Article #167-1 of the Code of Administrative Offences).

On ***9 April*** the Ministry of Justice completed the check-up of the activity of the Union of Belarusian Writers and composed a list of the found law violations. The Ministry of Justice stated: "At the entrance of the building where the legal address of the association is placed, there hangs a shield with the name that doesn't correspond to the registered one and, moreover, makes use of the former state emblem of the Republic of Belarus". Among the stated violations there are also the facts that some of the Union members live outside Belarus and that the Union members don't pay the membership fees regularly. For these violations the Ministry of Justice issued a written warning to Belarusian Union of Writers. In the text of the warning it was said that in the case if the violations, mentioned in the warning, repeat during the year, the organization will be liquidated.

On ***12 April*** Polatsk police detained the Zubr activists Iauhien Afnahiel, Mikita Sasim and Nastasia Vasilienka and drew up reports for violation of article 167.10 of the Code of Administrative Offences – activity on behalf of unregistered organization. The trial was conducted by Judge Iryna Darodka. She didn't satisfy the solicitation of the Zubr members to admit to the trial the human rights activist Dzmitry Salauiou as defender of their interests. The judge said that only advocates could participate in administrative trials and ignored the references to the Constitution and the ruling of the plenum of the Supreme Court where presence of representatives is allowed. As a result of the trial Mikita Sasim was fined 10 basic units (190 000 rubles). Iauhien Afnahiel and Nastasia

Vasilienka were warned. The confiscated white-red-white flags and printed materials were declared evidence and weren't returned to them.

On ***13 April*** Minsk Leninski Borough Court fined Mikhail Marynich about 90 USD for the fact that in the "Collapse" article, published in the newspaper Narodnaia Volia. Mikhail Marynich called himself a member of the public organization "For Worthy Life". This organization wasn't been registered by the Ministry of Justice, though appropriate documents were filed. At the trial, Mikhail Marynich put it down to a technical mistake: during the reprinting of the text the words "organization committee" before "For Worthy Life" were omitted. It's worth mentioning, that Mikhail Marynich informed the Ministry of Justice about it before the trial.

On ***13 April*** Human Rights Center Viasna complained to the UN Committee on Human Rights Judge of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Belarus on behalf of the head of the organization Board Alies Bialiatski and nine more members of the organization. On 28 October 2003 the judge of the Supreme Court Valiantsina Kulik decided to liquidate HRC Viasna and the decision was enforced immediately after its pronouncing. According to the legislation of the Republic of Belarus, verdicts of the Supreme Court are final and can't be reversed. That's why having depleted all the possibilities for defense at the national level (review complaint to the head of the Supreme Court), Viasna representatives prepared a complaint to the UN Commission on Human Rights that mentions the main violations of the national and international legislation, committed during the consideration of the case at the Supreme Court, including part 1 of article 14, parts 1 and 2 of article 22 and article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that was ratified by Belarus. Viasna members are of the opinion that the main violations are violation of the right to fair trial by independent court: "We hope for fair trial, though we understand that even if the case is decided in our favor, Belarusian authorities won't restore the registration to Viasna and will ignore the decision of the UN Committee on Human Rights. Anyway, it will be a moral victory for us, confirmation of our right at the highest international level."

On ***13 April*** mothers of the missing Belarusian politicians Valiantsina Hanchar, Uliana Zakharanka, Viktar Hanchar's wife Zinaida Hanchar and mother of the missing journalist Dzmitry Zavadski Volha Zavadskaia passed a letter to the UN Commission on Human Rights with the as¬sistance of the head of the Human Rights Center Viasna Alies Bialiatski who was invited to the commission hearings. In their letter they stated: "We, mothers and wives of the missing Belarusian politicians and journalist Zinaida Hanchar, Valiantsina Hanchar, Volha Zavadskaia and Uliana Zakharanka, completely support the UN Resolution on human rights violations of 17 April 2003. We are grateful for your concern about the

fate of our relatives. We inform you that for the time that passed since the adoption of the Resolution there weren't any changes with the cases on the kidnaps of the regime's opponents. Your urges concerning retirement or terminal displacement of the duty officials who could have relation to disappearances or/and lawless death punishments from their positions till the appropriate investigation weren't taken into consideration. All necessary measures for complete and objective investigation of the forced kidnaps of our relatives and punishment of the persons guilty weren't taken. We ask you to apply all possible means of pressure on Belarusian authorities within your competence to make them execute their undertakings to the country's citizens and the international commitments of the Republic of Belarus. We are grateful to you for understanding of the situation of our families and believe that your actions will help in finding the truth about what happened to our relatives, because, despite the fact that much time has passed, we continue to wait and hope".

On ***13 April*** the head of the Human Rights Center Viasna Alies Bialiatski was invited for a meeting with the 2003 Nobel Prize Winner Shirin Ebadi, president of the Iranian Center for Defense of Human Rights. Alies Bialiatski told her about the situation of human rights in Belarus. Shirin Ebadi agreed to visit Belarus in 2005.

On ***13 April*** the briefing "Human Rights in Belarus" took place in the Palace of Nations in Geneva. It was attended by the representatives of official delegations of the countries and NGOs that were interested in these topics. The head of the Human Rights Center Viasna Alies Bialiatski, the Secretary General of FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights) Philippe Kalfayan and the representatives of the International League of Human Rights in Geneva Aleksey Korotayev described the human rights situation in Belarus. During the briefing P. Kalfayan presented the report "Belarus – liquidation of independent civil society", prepared by the International Juridical Observatory on the results of the FIDH mission to Belarus in October 2003.

On ***13 April*** the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) suggested the UN Commission on Human Rights to urge Belarusian authorities to reopen liquidated NGOs and to recognize the role of the human rights defenders in the field of democracy. In its official letter the FIDH also expressed its concern with the ceaseless harassment of NGOs in Belarus and condemned the presidential decrees that considerably violated the rights of NGOs along with the juridical liquidation of NGOs. FIDH also enumerated the organizations that were liquidated in 2003 and called the actions that were the grounds for liquidation (human rights activity, legal aid to citizens, election monitoring). It's worth mentioning that FIDH is an organization with special consultative status at the

Commission and therefore its recommendations are quite significant for the Commission members.

On ***14 April*** the chair of Human Rights Center Viasna Alies Bialiatski had a working meeting with the Special Representative on Human Rights Activists Hina Jilani. They talked about the worsening of the situation of human rights in Belarus. Alies Bialiatski told her about the new facts of liquidation of NGOs in Belarus, initiation of criminal cases towards opposition politicians and human rights activists for criticizing the authorities and about persecution of youth and trade-unions. Hina Jilani was really interested in the new information and said that her office attentively watched the situation of human rights in Belarus. She also said that she had applied to the Belarusian authorities seVieral times already with the request to permit her visit to Belarus, but received refusals. Nevertheless, she said she would continue attempts to influence human rights in Belarus. On the same day Alies Bialiatski had a meeting with Olive Moore, the representative of the Irish mission of the UN Commission on Human Rights, who was responsible for the presentation of the resolution on human rights in Belarus. It's worth mentioning that at present Ireland presides at the EU and the draft Resolution is supported by all EU members.

On ***14 April*** Minsk Tsentralny Borough Court tried the activist of the Zubr movement Daryia Maldavanava, detained for the poster "He must retire!". Judge Natallia Vaitsiakhovich found the detainee guilty of violation of article 167.1 of the Code of Administrative Offences (violation of the order of organization and holding of mass actions) and fined her.

On ***14 April***, before classes at the Agricultural department of Belarusian State Agricultural University, vice-dean of the department came up to the member of the BSA Board Siarhiei Siemianiuk and said he wanted to talk with him about missing of classes and possible consequences. However, when they entered the dean's office, the vice-dean showed Siarhiei two persons in plain clothes, who wanted to talk to him. They didn't introduce themselves, only said they were KGB workers. They immediately started to ask the student questions about the latest BSA activities. They were mostly interested in the human rights campaign of BSA "Open students' forum Thoughts aloud". Within the framework of this campaign on 22 April there will be a free rock-concert and in May – an international conference on students' rights. Siarhiei refused to ask the questions of the strangers… He thinks it was an attempt of secret services to influence his public activity and BSA activities in general. For instance, heads of regional BSA branches are summoned to dean's offices and warned about sanctions for the public activity. Represen¬tatives of the administrations of higher educational establishments considered

Tankisty newsletter of the BSA branch of Maksim Tank Belarusian State Pedagogical University at the special seminar on ideology that was held in Minsk. The worker of higher educational establishments who didn't want his name to be mentioned said that this seminar contained a special section on discussion of the BSA activity and the ways to pressurize the organization. In connection with these events the BSA Board stated the organization would continue defending the rights or its members and other students despite threats, pressurization and senseless charges and that no one would be left without support in the case of unfair treatment by the administration of educational establishment or other structures.

On ***14 April*** Frantsysk Skaryna Belarusian Language Society submitted a letter to the education minister Aliaksandr Radzkou to protest against the discrimination of the school leavers educated in Belarusian language. The matter is that in 2004 the Ministry of Education began the practice of centralized state tests for school-leavers. These tests are not obligatory, but their results can influence on entering higher educational establishments. The tasks of the tests were prepared only in Russian language, despite the fact that both Russian and Belarusian are state languages of Belarus. Frantysk Skaryna Association of Belarusian Languages states that by this the Ministry of Education violated a number of articles of the present legislation that guaranteed to students equal linguistic possibilities in the field of education (for instance, article 6 of the Law on languages and article 50 of the Constitution). In fact, BLS passed to the Ministry of Education a note of protest concerning this fact before the beginning of the tests. In the answer, signed by the director of the Republican institute of knowledge control Mikhail Fiaskou, it was said that the tests were voluntary that's why those who didn't understand Russian didn't have to be tested. As a result BLS demanded from the minister to discriminate in this situation. We should remind that nowadays Belarusian is the language of instruction at a quarter of Belarusian schools. Most of them are village schools to and Lukashenka promised to their graduates facilitated entrance to higher educational establishments.

On ***14 April*** the Supreme Court of Belarus considered the suit of the Ministry of Justice for liquidation of the national Belarusian Association of Young Politicians. The formal reason for the liquidation is the difference between the registered address and the real situation of the organization office. Besides, the organization was charged with having changed the title "president of BAYP" to "head of BAYP" too late, in December 2003. According to the organization head Aliaksandr Tsynkievich, the Ministry of Justice also referred to the fact that some time ago the organization stamp didn't meet the ministry standards. However, the mistakes in the stamp were corrected on the initiative

of BAYP members. It's worth mentioning that for the five years of its existence BAYP never received a warning. In January 2004, after a sitting of the BAYP Board the organization submitted to the ministry the request to introduce changes to its statute concerning its legal address and the title of its head. The Ministry of Justice filed the liquidation suit to the Supreme Court instead of reacting to the request.

On ***14 April*** the activists of the United Civil Party Vital Rymasheuski and Iury Bychkouski were detained at the check-point of Minsk Factory of Wheel Tractors while handing-out the fly-sheets "Five steps to better life".

On ***15 April*** Minsk Savietski Borough Court of Minsk summoned Viktar Hanchar to court as a defendant for non-payment of the fees for public utilities. His wife and son received the same call-ups. It's interesting that the call-up was filed by the court who found Viktar Hanchar missing in December 2002. The story with non-payment of the fees for public utilities began on 7 September 2003, the day of Viktar Hanchar's birthday. There was a fire at the roof of the house where Hanchar's family lived. As a result, all the wires, wallpaper and the floor were spoiled. The borough administration decided to allow to the local state association on house repair and maintenance to renovate the house and decided to give 1 320 000 rubles for it. However, the money weren't paid and Zinaida Hanchar had to make repairs at her own cost. That's why she concluded an oral agreement with the association that she wouldn't pay the fees for public utilities as compensation. That's why Zinaida Hanchar didn't pay them for the previous month. When the sum of the non-paid fees reached 414 000 rubles, her husband, son and she were summoned to the trial that is to start on 19 April (though it is a day-off for state bodies). Zinaida Hanchar intended to visit the court on 17 April together with her advocate Paviel Sapelka and file counter-claim.

On ***15 April*** it became known that the newspaper Vitsiebskaia Trybuna that had turned into a regional edition short time before and was the only independent newspaper in the city of Orsha and in its district was deprived of its license. The editorial staff of the newspaper found about it occasionally, when it was necessary to prolong the newspaper's contract with the printing house. The printing house received this document in the middle of February. However, the editor of Vitsebskaia Trybuna Siarhiei Serabro wasn't informed about it and therefore missed the opportunity to complain against it. The official reason for the license liquidation is liquidation of the founder of the newspaper, Center of Youth Initiatives Contour. However, Contour was liquidated 7 months before. That's why the editor of Vitsiebskaia Trybuna" thinks that the newspaper was deprived of registration for support to the recent protest action, held by Vitsiebsk businessmen: the newspaper site presented the chronicle of their hunger-strike, photos

and other materials. The hunger-strike lasted since 2 till 14 February. On 15 February the decision to deprive the newspaper of license was taken.

On ***15 April*** the UN Committee on Human Rights adopted the reso¬lution that condemns human rights violations in Belarus. The Committee established the post of special reporter on Belarus, who is to study the situation of human rights in Belarus and present a report at the next session. Alies Bialiatski, chair of Human Rights Center Viasna, thusly commented on this event: "It is the second resolution on Belarus. I should remind that last year the UN Committee on Human Rights also adopted a resolution on Belarus, which was quite surprising. The countries that created and adopted this resolution are of the opinion that this year the situation with human rights hasn't improved. The resolution was initiated by the EU countries and the USA. It mentions the things that are well-known to Belarusian citizens: the pressure of the authorities on deve¬lopment of NGOs, the political life of democratic parties in Belarus, the unsatisfactory investigation into the cases of the missing persons, the present problems of European Humanities University and the liquidation of Iakub Kolas National State Humanities Lyceum. The most interesting moment in the resolution is in the sixth point. It is the proposal to introduce the post of the special reporter on human rights in Belarus from the UN Human Rights Committee. This position is usually introduced only for countries with total human rights violations. I think that this step is a direct evidence of the growing concern of the world community concer¬ning the situation with human rights in Belarus." 23 countries voted for the resolution, 13 – against, 17 – abstained from voting.

On ***15 April*** the public services of Hrodna evicted the public asso-ciation Batskaushchyna from its office for having allegedly given one of the rented rooms to the editorial board of the Den newspaper. Batskaushchyna received a letter from the director of Hrodna Leninski Borough Board of Public Services A.Litvin who ordered the organization to leave the building by 15 May. The Board of Public Services was going to sue Batskaushchyna in the case they didn't leave the quarters by the specified term. "The reason for the cancellation of the agreement is the placement of Hrodna office of the Den newspaper in untenantable quarters without the permission of the appropriate services" – reads the letter. Batskaushchyna was charged with having rented the room it rented itself without the written agreement of the Board of Public Services and the appropriate decision of Hrodna City Executive Committee. Some days before the circulation of the Den was detained in Iuie and some persons tried to get break into the office. Mikola Markievich, the head of the board of Batskaushchyna and the senior editor of the newspaper, thinks it's not an occasion. He stated that the office room was sub-rented neither judicially, nor factually. The Den rented an office in Minsk and pretensions

of the public services could be caused by the fact that there were many journalists of the newspaper among Batskaushchyna members.

On ***16 April*** the Supreme Court liquidated the national public asso-ciation New Group that dealt with voluntary activity and represented in Belarus the world organization International Civil Service which is more than 80 years old.

On ***16 April*** Tamara Shchapiotkina, journalist of the newspaper Gazeta Dlya Vas issued in the town of Biaroza was punished for having given publicity to the fact that chair of an election commission had been tried for violation of election legislation. The matter is that on 23 Novem¬ber 2003, during the additional election to Belaaziorsk Town Deputy Soviet, Tamara Shchapiotkina, journalist of the newspaper "Gazeta Dlya Vas" was at one of the polling station. There, in presence of OSCE representatives, the National Assembly, Swedish journalist Tobias Lungval and other people, she stated that the head of this polling station Nina Pratasievich had been tried by the court for violation of electoral legislation during the election to local Deputy Soviets that was held on 3 March 2003 and this time was again appointed the head of the polling station electoral commission. The journalist asked N. Pratasievich how it happened that the head of the electoral commission, who had violated the law, was again put at the head of the commission. Besides, Tamara Shchapiotkina informed the present public that the head of Biaroza District Electoral Commission Miadzviedz was also tried for violations of the electoral legislation during the election to local Deputy Soviets and then was again appointed the head of the district com-mission. As a result, Nina Pratasevich sued the journalist. She considered this information to be "distribution of the information that insults honor and dignity (part 1 of article 153 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Belarus). On 16 April Judge of Biaroza District Court Aliena Niamkova considered the case. The sides discussed the understanding of the term "tried by the court". The plaintiff stated that it was a synonym to "convict" and meant criminal punishment and that all persons present at the polling station understood it that way. "This talk had a wide resonance and now many of my acquaintances asked whether I really had a conviction. Having been a school director for many years, I think that these rumors about conviction insult my honor, dignity and business reputation", — testified Nina Pratasievich. Tamara Shchapiotkina said: "Being an honest person I decided to give publicity to the fact that the head of the polling station commission has been "tried by court". Finally, Judge Aliena Niamkova took the side of the plaintiff and partially satisfied the suit of N. Pratasevich stating that the court "concludes that Shchapiotkina, having no juridical education, distributed information about "conviction" of Pratasevich that weren't real"

and decided to exact from the journalist 300 000 rubles for compensation of moral harm and 190 000 rubles of state fee.

On ***17 April*** Aliaksandr Smal, procurator of Baranavichy City Pro-curator’s Office issued warnings to the senior editor of the public and political weekly Intex-press Uladzimir Ianukievich and the correspon-dent of this edition Maryna Kulikova. The journalists were charged with violation of part 1 of Article 34 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus and articles 32 and 40 of the Law on press. The warning was made on the basis of the complaint of the head of Baranavichy City Executive Committee Viktar Dzichkouski, who was discontented with the article “Scandal in Noble Family” (No.11 of 11 March 2004) about the joining of one of Baranavichy units of the pro-presidential Belarusian Republican Youth Union to the unregistered youth mo¬vement Zubr. Procurator A. Smal stated that the journalists “didn’t check whether the information of the journalists was true”. On 1 April Baranavichy procurator’s office tried to summon the author of the article. The Intex-press journalists were going to complain against the warning.

On ***17 April*** the opposition planned to hold a meeting in Navarechytski suburb or Rechytsa. The leaders of People’s coalition 5+ were to have spoken at it. SeVieral thousand fly-sheets with information about 5+ were distributed. However, the town authorities groundlessly prohibited to the applicant Valiery Putsistski, chair of Rechytsa BPF organization, to hold the action. The administration of the institution where he worked as an engineer directed him to a mining hole, so that he wouldn’t be able to appear at the meeting.

On ***17-18 April*** the seminar “Tolerance issues in Belarusian society and in the world” was organized by Human Rights Center Viasna and the Swedish organization Svenska Freds. The latter organization is more than 120 years old and was twice Noble peace prize winner. The seminar was attended mainly by representatives of human rights and other public organizations of Vitsiebsk region. The main discussion issue was tolerance in Belarus.

On ***17 and 18 April*** Russia TV-channel was disconnected in Belarus since 5 till 8.30 p.m. This decision was taken by the Ministry of Com-munication due to alleged unplanned repair works. However, the press-service of the TV channel disproves this statement and suggests that this “maintenance” could be caused by the previews of the programs Zerkalo and Vesti where a sharp discussion of Aliaksandr Lukashenka’s policy was to take place.

On ***17 April*** groups of Evangelic Baptist Christians from Mazyr, Brest and Malaryta congratulated visitors and patients of Mazyr hospital with Easter. The police detained them, interrogated, made violation reports and let go, except for Vasil Bilas, Mikalai Krynts and Lieanid Marty-novich. Mazyr Court fined them 20 basic units each (about $570) for an alleged unauthorized meeting.

On ***21 April*** the tax inspection workers A.Ialovik and L. Kadushka came to Dzmitry Salauiou's flat. In his presence they composed a report on violation of the tax law. In the report it was stated that "On 9 April Salauiou didn't let to hold control measures and find whether he carried out any commercial activity in the building which its owner calls "Dzmitry Salauiou's Office". The workers of the tax inspection showed Salauiou the order to conduct unscheduled route check-up concerning "receipt of money from customers (clients), providing services, etc". The human rights activist refused to let the officials in, stating that he didn't carry out any economical activity and made no financial operations. He also showed them documents that witnessed his words. Then the workers of the tax inspection composed the act "about the visit to Mr. Salauiou D.S.". Before that he had been summoned to the police and to the pro-curator's office and warned for the possibility of punishment for activity on behalf of an unregistered (liquidated) organization.

On ***21 April*** Homiel Chyhunachny Borough Court didn't satisfy the suit of Uladzimir Katsora, the subscriber of Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta who tried to return 38 000 rubles he paid for subscription to the newspaper and exact from the Homiel regional post 500 000 rubles as compensation of moral harm to him. In his opinion, the post deprived him of the source of information. At the trial it was found that the postal department wasn't a juridical body and can't be a defendant. Judge Maltsau agreed that Homiel regional post couldn't bear responsibility for actions of Belarusian national post that, according to Judge, ordered to stop the distribution of the newspaper. As a result, Judge Maltsau decided to direct the suit of Uladzimir Katsora to Minsk Leninski Borough Court and address it to Belarusian national post.

On ***22 April*** the Supreme Court ruled to liquidate Belarusian Asso-ciation of Young Politicians. The court agreed to all charges of the Ministry of Justice against the organization. Judge Filimanikhina found all the pretensions of the Ministry to Belarusian Union of Young Politicians grounded and decided to liquidate the organization. She considered the facts that the association had no legal address for almost two years, used inappropriate seal and failed to timely change the title of "president" to "head" as law violations. Representatives of Belarusian Union of Young Politicians tried to file a counter-suit against the Ministry of Justice, but the suit wasn't accepted. The head of the

association Aliaksandr Tsynkievich said that despite of the liquidation the activists of the association weren't going to stop their public and political activity.

On ***22 April*** the relatives of the missing Belarusian politicians and journalists upheld the resolution of the UN Committee on Human Rights and the appointment of the special rapporteur on Belarus. In the letter sent to the UN Commission on Human Rights, Zinaida Hanchar wrote on behalf of mothers of the kidnapped Iury Zakharanka, Viktar Hanchar and Dzmitry Zavadski and her own wrote: We express our gratitude for adoption of the Resolution on the situation of human rights in Belarus of 15 April 2004. We thank you for raising the issue of forced disappearan-ces of our relatives, political opponents of the existing regime is discussed at such a high level and for the fact that more and more people from different countries of the world become concerned with our grief. We hope that the demands that are stated in the Resolution will be heard and will be not only considered by Belarusian authorities but will also become a guideline for them. We support your decision to appoint a Special reporter whom we would be glad to meet in Belarus and tell him more details about what happened to our relatives and how the investigation is conducted."

On ***22 April*** the Supreme Court liquidated two independent organi-zations the Belarusian Center for Constitutionalism and Comparative Legal Studies, and the International Institute for Political Studies. Both organizations dealt with research in politics. First of them is cooperated with the Council of Europe in the field of human rights. For the seven years of its activity Belarusian Center of Constitutionalism and Compa-rative Legal Studies held seVieral conferences on these issues and published 30 books. Among them there are such works as "Abolishment of Death Penalty in Belarus" and "Political Parties in Belarus". The Center also facilitated the wider use of the European standards of human rights in Belarusian laws. Scientists of the International Institute of Political Research studied the problems of security, international relations and peculiarities of the political situation of Belarus. Both organizations were liquidated on the initiative of the Ministry of Justice. In one of the cases the controllers from the Ministry of Justice found mistakes in the registration documents, in the other they found out that the legal address was registered at a private flat. The Supreme Court agreed with the Ministry of Justice and considered that these reasons were sufficient for the liquidation of the organizations. The worker of the closed International Institute for Political Studies Andrei Fiodarau said that these liquidations could be a part of preparation of the authorities to political campaigns: the parliamentary elections and, secondly, possible referendum about amendments to the Constitution concerning the third presidential term.

On ***22 April*** Ivan Biedka, chair of Slonim district branch of BPF Party, was warned by court for holding a meeting to celebrate the 86th anniversary of declaration of Belarusian People's Republic. Ivan Biedka had the authorization for the meeting, but the police drew two reports on him. The first one concerned the usage of white-red-white flag. In their second report they wrote that BPF Party wasn't registered in Slonim, that's why the meeting was unauthorized (!) At the trial Ivan Biedka explained that he submitted the application for the meeting authorization on behalf of the public association BPF Adradzhennie, not BPF Party, and the public association was registered in the town. Judge Tatsiana Khamiets decided that the defendant really didn't violate Article #167.10 of the Code of Administrative Offences (activity on behalf of unregistered organization), but warned him under Article #167-2 – usage of unre-gistered symbols.

On ***22 April*** Navapolatsk City Executive Committee prohibited the meeting with the participation of the pre-electoral coalition 5+. The application for the holding of the meeting was filed on 6 April. The meeting was to have taken place in the square opposite the city recreation house. However, last Monday the applicant, human rights activist Dzmitry Salauiou received the official refusal to authorize the measure: the measure was prohibited because "The organizer or the person, responsible for the organization of the measure didn't attach to the application the written undertaking to hold the measure". According to Mr. Salauiou, it was open mockery at the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus that guarantees to citizens liberty of meetings and assemblies.

On ***23 April*** the investigator A. Zalieuski informed Tatsiana Protska, chair of Belarusian Helsinki Committee, that she had to give a written undertaking to stay in the city during the investigation of the criminal case against her. On the eve of this Belarusian Helsinki Committee sued to Minsk Economic Court asking to find the decision of Minsk Maskouski Borough Inspection of Dues and Taxes concerning the imposing of taxes on BHC completely lawless. The International Helsinki Federation also stated that the criminal case against Belarusian Helsinki Committee is politically motivated and urged to dismiss all charges against the human rights activists.

On ***25 April*** at the market of Lida the police detained Uladzimir Lievanieuski, the son of Valiery Lievanieuski (chair of the national strike committee of businessmen).

On ***26 April*** Hrodna organization of Frantsishak Skaryna Belarusian Language Society received the ultimatum to leave its headquarters within month's term. Otherwise, the housing services of Hrodna threat to sue against the association to economic court. The head of Hrodna BSL organization Mikola Markievich was surprised at finding about the eviction as the organization timely paid its monthly rent. Hrodna Leninski Borough

Housing Enterprise issued to him the paper where it was said that the organization was evicted from the building for the unauthorized placing of Den newspaper editorial office on the territory of its headquarters.

On ***27 April*** the criminal case upon article 243 “Evasion from payment of taxes” was brought against Mikhail Varaniets, chair of Slonim City Public Association Will for Development. He was summoned to inter-rogation as a suspect. The reason for the case initiation was that the organization allegedly violated the order of usage of the financial means that was received as financial aid within the framework of the TACIS program in 2003. The means issued to the PA “Will for Development” for fulfillment of the teenage club “Sviatlitsa” was freed from taxes by agreement between Belarusian government and European Commission. However, Slonim Town Tax Inspection decided to follow not the inter-national agreement (that is supreme to all Belarusian national laws and normative acts) but the instructions that provide payment of taxes from all programs of foreign free aid. On 16 April for this “violation” Will for Development was deprived of its property. Besides, the tax inspection imposed on it about $15 000 fine. Taking into consideration the huge volume of the allegedly non-paid taxes, Slonim financial police initiated the criminal case. Article 243 of the Criminal Code provides up to 3 years in jail as punishment. Simultaneously, Mikhail Varaniets sued to Slonim Borough Court against the illegal actions of the financial police officer Uladzimir Iurchak, who psychologically pressurized him and violated his process rights. This criminal case is similar to the case against the head of the republican human rights organization “Belarusian Helsinki Committee” Tatsiana Protska and the accountant of the organization Tatsiana Rudkievich, who are also charged with misuse of the financial means received on TACIS program.

On ***26 April*** Minsk saw the traditional Chernobyl Way procession, with seVieral thousands of people taking part in the event. The meeting and procession participants who had gathered at Iakub Kolas Square held in their hands posters saying “Time to stop the age of political Chernobyl”, “Stop production of radioactive products” and some other slogans criticizing A. Lukashenka for what he’d said recently. After he had visited Chernobyl-affected areas, the president said they were “clean and could be used to plant onions”. The police had issued a warning referring to the Iakub Kolas Square rally as a banned event. However, no large scale detentions took place. After the people attempted to start the procession, special police squad officers turned up and blocked the way to downtown. They also tried detaining the UCP leader Anatol Liabiedzka but failed. Walking along F.Skaryna Avenue, the procession wanted to go as far as the Academy of Sciences. After turning from the avenue into Surhanau Street, the sorrow toll

was started at the head of the Chernobyl Way. The toll is a regular feature of such events. In addition to the toll, those at the head also had an icon in their hands. At first, the procession organizers were afraid the icon could be confiscated. In Surhanau Street, the column, that had been becoming larger all the time, left the sidewalk and continued on the road. At the corner of Surhanau Street and Karastaianava Street, the academician Ivan Nikitchanka proposed to observe a minute of silence to commemorate the people who had died because of the Chernobyl disaster. He reminded about the disaster consequences to the health of the Belarusian nation. Then Aliaksandr Dabravolski, Vintsuk Viachorka and others made speeches. Police officers served the procession organizers with notices requiring them to appear in the BDIA in the morning of 27 April. Among those who had been served notices are Liudmila Hraznova (UCP), Alies Mikhalievich (deputy chair of the BPF party), Paviel Znavets (BSDP), Hienadz Bykau (chair of the Free Trade Union).

On ***26 April*** before the Chernobyl Way action started, the BPF party office was blocked by people in plain clothes who prevented vehicles from leaving the premises and detained people as they were leaving the building. First, a Polish journalist was detained, who showed his journalist ID and was released. At 6 p.m. Andrei Sukhavierkhi, a BPF party activist, was arrested. When A.Sukhavierkhi was leaving the courtyard of his house, some people in plain clothes rushed to the car trying to stop it. Doing so, they did not show any documents. One of them struck against the hood of the car that was moving at the smallest speed. A.Sukhavierkhi immediately stopped the car after traffic police turned up. They took A.Sukhavierkhi's driving license and left the confiscated car on the parking lot outside the Savietski Borough Board of Internal Affairs for "further inspection". After A.Sukhavierkhi was taken to the Savietski BBIA, the officers there drew up a report registering "a traffic accident".

On ***26 April*** 11 participants of the Chernobyl action in Vitsiebsk were detained. The police detained Aliena Zalieskaia, chair of Vitsiebsk city organization of United Civil Party, and UCP activists Ela Kanavalava and Uladzimir Siemienchukou. The police also detained seVieral passers-by, who joined the action: pensioner Roza Pushkarova who had been just handed a couple of leaflets, and Radio Polonia reporter Iury Stsiapanau, who had copies of inde-pendent newspapers with him. Member of Christian Conservative Party Ian Taupyha managed to walk only a dozen meters together with the action participants and was detained for the same reason. The police officers claim they detained Kanstantsin Kuzniatsou, student of the local Medical University, be-cause he was standing nearby and hindered them from their work. The police officers conducted a personal search of UCP activists Fiodar Bakunou and Siarhiei Katushou on the street.

They searched through their clothes and personal belongings looking for leaflets. Police officers claim the leaflets contain undesirable information about the conse-quences of the Chernobyl disaster. All the detained were charged with parti-cipa¬tion in an unauthorized action.

On ***26 April*** Minsk City Court rejected the complaint filed by the editorial board of Narodnaia Volia newspaper. The journalists asked to rule down the decision of Leninski Borough Court of 18 February, which partially satisfied the suit of Alliance-Media open joint stock company (founder of Obozrevatel newspaper) to defend honor, dignity and business reputation. Under the Leninski court decision, the Narodnaia Volia was to disprove Anton Kuzniatsou's article «Bandit Treatment of Leonid Levin by Sergey Otroshchenko's Obozrevatel. Besides that, the editorial board was to pay the court duty and the services of the plaintiffs' lawyer. In the original suit Alliance Media also demanded 50 million BYR as a compensation for moral damage, reports press-service of the Belarusian Association of Journalists.

In the ***night of 26-27 April*** the police arrested Mikhail Marynich, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, ex-minister of External Economic relations of the Republic of Belarus, and ex-Ambassador of Belarus in Latvia, Estonia, and Finland. At 3 p.m. of 26 April Mikhail Marynich was invited to KGB for interrogation. In the evening the officers searched his summer house and seized his archive. After the search Mikhail Marynich was arrested on suspicion of having committed a crime.

On ***27 April*** the court sentenced Dzmitry Ivanouski, vice-chair of the public association of businessmen Perspective, to 15 days in jail for the alleged active participation in the meeting of 26 April.

On ***27 April*** Savietski borough court of Minsk Judge Natallia Skuha-rava sentenced Andrei Koziel to 7 days in jail. He was detained in the evening of 26 April, after the end of Chernobyl March. The activist of United Civil Party spent the night in the detention center in Akrestsin Street, Andrei Koziel was found guilty under Art 167.1 part 1 of the Code of Administrative Offences (violation of order of holding mass events). This article provides for a fine of 20-150 basic units or an arrest of 3 to 15 days.

On ***27 April*** Ruslan Kazadaieu, judge for the Minsk Savietski Borough Court, heard the testimonies of six witnesses in the case against the human rights activist Liudmila Hraznova who denied her taking part in the unauthorized procession. She was indignant at the police reports claiming she was shouting and calling people to join the column, and waving her hands. She was charged under Art 167.1 part 2 of the Code of Administrative

Offences (violation of procedure of holding mass events). Judge Ruslan Kazadaieu ruled to fine Hraznova 225 basic units (about 2000 USD).

On ***27 April*** Judge Aksana Relava tried Alies Mikhalievich, deputy chairperson of Belarusian People's Front and one of the Chernobyl March organizers. Mikhalievich was charged with violation of Art 167.1 part 2 of the Code of Administrative Offences. The verdict to Mikhalievich was 10 days in jail. Not all of Chernobyl Way organizers came to the police as the notices had told them to. Paviel Znaviets refused pointblank to follow the orders in the notice. Hienadz Bykau did come, but the police officers only took an explaining note from him, watched the video film and let him go. The thing was that Mr. Bykau was at the square near the stone monument to the Chernobyl disaster victims and was not taking part in the procession.

On ***27 April*** the chair of the information board of Malaryta district administration Siarhiei Strok claimed at the meeting in Struha village BPF was on the side of the fascist Germany during the Second World War. Meetings in Struha and Pazhezhyn villages of Brest region were initiated by Malaryta district councilor Uladzimir Maliei

On ***27 April*** four members of the Belarusian Social Democratic Party Narodnaia Hramada were detained in Brest. They were handing out leaflets about the activities of their party, its attitude to the Eu

MAY

On ***1 May*** Belarusian Social Democratic Party Narodnaia Hramada and their allies of the European coalition “Free Belarus” celebrated the Labor Day. Our neighbors – Poland, Lithuania and Latvia became a part of the European Union. The peoples of these countries chose freedom, security, development and welfare. Belarusian social-democrats also tie the future of Belarus with the united Europe. Activists of Minsk city BSDP (NH) organization and young social democrats participated in the authorized May demonstration in Ianka Kupala Park. They unrolled white-red-white party flags and flags of the European Union. They handed out literature about the European Union. Social democrats were supported by the youth movements “Young Front” and Zubr, the Women’s party Nadzeia, the European Movement and the European House. The authorities inadequately reacted to these actions. Unknown persons in plain clothes assaulted the action participants. They beat people, grabbed flags and slogans. They even pulled into police cars seVieral people, who were holding flags of the European Union and national flags. They also tried to take away BSDP flags, but the organization activists managed to defend their symbols. Five participants of the demonstration were detained. Among them there was Paviel Hormash, vice-head of the public association Young Social Democrats and a member of the European Movement. Later on he was charged with “distribution of fly-sheets with urges to enter the European Union”.

On ***1 May*** the subscription to printed editions for the second half of the year has started. However, now the state monopolizes the subscription market. Since 1 May everyone, who intended to earn money on subscription, was to have a special license. However, the Ministry of Communications didn’t give licenses to anyone and therefore the state enterprise Belposhta is a monopolist. In the end of 2003 the law on postal connections was adopted. It provides licensing of postal services, including subscription to periodical editions and their delivery to readers. However, the NGOs that dealt with subscription received letters with the demands to “specify their intentions”. First of all, the Ministry of Communications demanded to present the content of subscription catalogues and separate lists of foreign editions which it was intended to distribute on the territory of Belarus and also specify how the delivery of newspapers to the country would be fulfilled. All NGOs were warned that they had to have license in order to run subscription for the second half of the year, whereas beforehand every editorial office decided this problem on its own. Belarusian Association of Journalists filed a letter to the Ministry of Communications, referring to the law on press where it is openly stated: “Every editorial staff has the right to independently distribute its edition independently or on agreement with other organization, both state and private. The answer of the

ministry was that the organizations had to have licenses for that. As it became known the sitting of the special commission which is to decide on the fate of private subscription enterprises is appointed on 10 May. There are also some other aspects of economical pressure on independent editions. The delivery expenses for state newspapers are covered from the budget, whereas independent editions have to pay them on their own. The prices for printing at state printing offices are higher for independent newspapers. Besides, despite the existence of private companies of distribution, only Belposhta has the possibility to deliver post to distant villages. Besides, it is necessary to remember repeated cases when so called “administrative resource” is used and authorities make different institutions subscribe to state press.

On ***1-2 May*** the 5th Congress of the Assembly of Pro-democratic NGOs of Belarus took place. 260 persons, 220 of whom were delegates, took part in it. At the congress the participation of NGOs in the parliamentary election was actively discussed. The majority of the forum participants agreed that it was necessary to cooperate with political structures during the upcoming electoral campaign.

On ***2 May*** Belarusian state TV gave publicity to some details of the criminal case against him. It was stated that a part of the 90 thousand of US dollars found at his garage were forged. The journalists also said that four computers were found at Marynich’s garage and that they had been given to him by the US Embassy for the establishment of the regional branch of Business Initiative regional organization.

In the beginning of May the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe heard the report of Christos Pourgourides and approved recommendations of the Committee of Ministers about sanctions towards Belarus. The resolutions and recommendations, which demanded to dismiss Belarusian Procurator General Viktar Sheiman, conduct independent investigation of the disappearances and trials over Belarusian officials involved, were submitted to the executive body of the Council of Europe.

On ***3 May*** Anatol Liabiedzka, chair of the United Civil Party, was summoned to Minsk Savietski Borough Board of Internal Affairs to be interrogated as a law-offender concerning the events of 26 April, organization of the Chernobyl Way action. A. Liabiedzka wasn’t an applicant for the authorization of the action and didn’t take part in it despite his being present in Iakub Kolas Square. The police tried to detain him, but he managed to escape. A. Liabiedzka came to the BBIA. However, while the police composed the report of violation (Article 167.1 of the Code of Administrative Offences) it was found that its content didn’t match the video film of the action. That’s why the report wasn’t drawn and A. Liabiedzka was let go.

On ***3 May*** Hrodna Leninski Borough Court sentenced head of the nationwide strike committee of businessmen Valiery Lievanieuski (detained on 1 May for distribution of flysheets with urges to strike) to 15 days in jail. The same day the police detained his 18-year-old Uladzimir Lievanieuski and sentenced him to 13 days in jail. Uladzimir Lievanieuski's schoolmate, 18-year-old Aliaksandr Traian, was sentenced to 3 days in jail for participation in the unauthorized action of businessmen. A businessman from Uzbekistan was arrested while trying to defend a girl whom the police tried to drag into their car. The businessman was found guilty of violation of articles 166 and 166 of the Code of Administrative Offences (resistance to the police and participation in unauthorized mass action) and sentenced to five days in jail.

On ***3 May*** Judge of Minsk Savietski Borough Court Natallia Skuharava sentenced Dzmitry Dashkievich to 15 days in jail for participation in the "Chernobyl Way" action of 26 April. Dashkievich was detained on 1 May in Ianka Kupala Square, when Young Front members unrolled the transparent with the inscription "Young Front". The police took him to Minsk Savietski Borough Board of Internal Affairs and then to the detention center in Akrestsin street and detained there till trial.

On ***3 May*** Zubr activist Mikhail N. was detained by the police in Asipovichy for posting of fly-sheets with Zubr logo and contact phone. Mikhail was taken to the local military unit, on the territory of which the local KGB Board was situated. Here he had a talk with the man who introduced himself as Ihar Anatolievich. He was interested in the activity of Zubr in Asipovichy and the whole country and the sources for its financing. When the youngster said he didn't have such information, the KGB worker advised him to get acquainted with as many activists of the movement as possible and pass to him the obtained information. At the end of the talk he gave to the fellow his working and mobile phone numbers and proposed to "phone if necessary". Then Mikhail gave written explanations and was let go.

On ***4 May*** the public association Vieras complained to Vitsiebsk Re-gional Court against the actions of the justice board of Vitsiebsk Regional Executive Committee. Vieras representatives believed that the official warning issued to the organization on 25 March for violation of the Law on public associations and its own statute, was groundless. For instance, in its suite Vieras completely disproved the accusation of the Ministry of Justice that the organization didn't have the right to hold a round table on inter-ethnic relations within "Equality. Tolerance. Respect" project. Vieras representatives consider this pretension wire-drawn and incom¬prehensible. To their mind, it is impossible to understand from the text of the warning which legal norm or the statute paragraph was

violated. They also disagreed with the opinion of the ministry that elaboration of laws didn't conform to the statute tasks and aims of the organization. The plaintiffs also stated that the Ministry of Justice was wrong con¬sidering the establishment of the local volunteer center as a law violation (the center was established in accordance with paragraph 2.2 of the organization statute). That's why public association Vieras asked the court to set the verdict aside.

On ***5 May*** Navapolatsk City Executive Committee officially refused to re-register the primary units of the Free Trade Union of the heating station and the joint-stock society Naftan. They also refused to re-register the regional organization of the mentioned trade union. The reason for such decision was that there were alleged deficiencies in the filed documents. Meanwhile, the head of the regional Polatsk and Navapolatsk organization of Free Trade Union Uladzimir Antanovich thinks that the reason wasn't judicially motivated. Polatsk and Navapolatsk regional organization was registered by Navapolatsk CEC on 3 May 2002. The necessity to re-register primary units of the Trade Union appeared as a result of adoption of amendments to its statute. The process of re-registration was protracted for nine months. Every time the CEC workers found some inaccuracies in the documents. Mr. Antanovich applied to Navapolatsk CEC for the permission to hold a meeting of protest on 20 May against persecution of Free Trade Union activists. We should remind that three heads of FTU primary units had been fired before it.

On ***5 May*** Baranavichy Light Industry College held a pedagogical council in order to remand Mikita Sasim. The formal reason was that he missed the classes. According to the college authorities, 10 days of arrest weren't an important reason not to attend the studies. We should remind that in the middle of March Baranavichy City Court sentenced Mikita Sasim to 10 days in jail for handing out newspapers on the territory of the college, as a result of which he missed the classes. Meanwhile, Mikita Sasim is one of the best students of the college, for his last semester he had one 7 and two 8 marks, the rest being the 9s and 10s, the highest ones. "The college authorities can have no pretensions to my marks. My friends and I are sure that the possible remand is a revenge of the college administration for our open action against BRSM", — said Mikita Sasim.

On ***5 May*** wheel-chair disabled held a number of pickets in Minsk and other cities of Belarus against violations of their rights. The action was devoted to the World Day of Solidarity of the Disabled. Leaders of the association of wheel-chair disabled stated that the state of the disabled in Belarus was worsening with every year. More than 20 people lined up along Banhalor Square in Minsk in order to remind the authorities about the problems of the disabled – absence of appropriate social and medical provision and the

possibility of employment. In their hands they held the posters: "We want to work", "Authorities and Housing Committees ignore our problems", State system against the disabled".

On ***6 May*** Minsk Piershamaiski Borough Court started the hearings on the suit of the head of Belarusian Helsinki Committee Tatsiana Prots-ka and her husband Dzmitry Kozyr to Belarusian State TV-Company and the journalist Iury Prakopau concerning protection of honor and dignity. The reason for the suit was the broadcast "V tsentre vnimaniya" ("In the center of attention"), demonstrated at first national TV-channel in the evening of 29 February and repeated in the morning of 1 March 2003. This material prepared by Iury Prakopau described profits and property of some representatives of Belarusian political parties and public organizations, including the head of Belarusian Helsinki Committee and her husband, head of Zabalattsie farm in Smaliavichy district. In private, a house and two cars that allegedly belonged to the family were shown. The author also called a huge sum of money, allegedly equivalent to the monthly wage of the BHC head. The plaintiffs stated that the National State Radio and TV-Company and Iury Prakopau violated the Constitution of Belarus and the Instruction about the regime of access to documents that concern private life of citizens (this document was adopted by the Committee on archives and office procedures on 3 July 1996). T. Protska's representative Hary Pahaniaila explained to the press-service of Belarusian Association of Journalists that access to the information that is considered as "secret of private life" is limited and can be achieved only after appropriate inquiries to court, procurator's office or investigative bodies. This information is not given to other citizens, because articles 28 and 29 of the Constitution guarantee secret of private life, whereas the information that was demonstrated by Belarusian television belonged to this category. On 6 May the plaintiffs disproved the majority of the information, stated in the program. The defendant failed to present any evidence that the information was true and refused to call the source from which it was obtained. Besides, it was found that the TV crew entered the private territory without autho-rization. Nevertheless, the journalist stated that the broadcast information was neutral. The representative of NSTRC Andrei Ivanou was of the opinion that the statement of the plaintiffs about "moral sufferings" was groundless. "It is too difficult to define where private life begins and ends", — he said. However, he had to admit that he didn't read the Instruction of the Committee on archives and office procedures. Having watched the video tape and listened to both sides, Judge Ananich decided to postpone the trial to 5 June. Judge also proposed to the plaintiffs to present declarations about income and property.

On ***6 May*** Hillary Rodham Clinton, John S. McCain and ten more US Senators addressed Aliaksandr Lukashenka with the request to stop reconstruction of Hrodna stadium Nioman. They believe that only personal intervention of the President might stop desecration of human remains taking place in Hrodna. The very fact of their address to Lukashenka was enough to make excavators disappear from the sta¬dium. At the same time, earth mixed with bones, which had been dumped in Novaia Street, was moved to the new Jewish cemetery, reports Den newspaper.

On ***7 May*** people who claimed they were KGB agents tried to break in the private flat of Valiery Lievanieuski, head of the unregistered strike committee of Belarusian businessmen. In the flat there were Lievanieuski's children – Anton, 12, and Katsiaryna, 17, and his mother-in-law Halina. In some time the riot police in masks arrived, smashed the door, and entered the flat. Immediately they started the search, which lasted for 6 hours. KGB agents forced 17-year-old Katsiaryna Lieva¬nieuskaia to testify against her father. After the search they took her to the Hrodna Regional KGB Board. All computers that were in the flat were confiscated. Lievanieuski's elder son, 20-year-old Dzmitry Lieva¬nieuski, was taken to KGB as well. KGB also detained Aliaksandr Vasilieu and searched his flat as well. They confiscated computers that belonged to his son and daughter and some documents. A. Vasilieu said that this search was related to the recently initiated case on distribution of printing production that contained insults of honor and dignity of president Lukashenka.

On ***7 May*** Mikhail Marynich was officially charged with illegal storage of arms. It was the only charge which KGB investigators decided to bring against the former minister and Ambassador Mikhail Marynich after ten days of detention at investigative insulator. Before that, they stated that Mikhail Marynich was charged with storage of secret docu-ments and sale of false dollars. The investigation was going on. Accor-ding to the advocate Viera Stramkouskaia who defended Marynich's interests, he didn't take the blame and explained his persecution with political motives. Mikhail Marynich also complained to Belarusian Republican Procurator's Office against illegal actions of KGB investi-gators towards him.

On ***7 May*** Iuie District Police Board composed two reports on. One of them, against the Den-press association, directed to the regional State control for alleged mistakes in the delivery note for the delivery of the newspaper from Smolensk printing house to Hrodna. Mikola Markievich, editor of Den newspaper said that according to the Law on Press, the newspaper print-run could be arrested only on court decision. The second report was composed on Markievich for the fact that the unregistered strike committee of Belarusian businessmen was mentioned in the newspaper. At first the police wanted

to compose it on the man who took the newspaper to Hrodna. The newspaper really contained the opinion of Valiery Lievanieuski, chair of the unregistered strike committee of businessmen. Mr. Lievanieuski informed the readers about the preparation of the action of protest that would be held on 1 May. That day Lievanieuski was detained and then sentenced to 15 days in jail.

On ***7 May*** European Humanities University stopped its financial activity. These actions of the university authorities were caused by the refusal of the Ministry of Education to prolong the education license to the university. The university staff stated that this step of Belarusian authorities would inflict considerable harm to EHU. The students of the university expressed their intention to defend their right to study. According to a Presidential decree, the Ministry of Education was to have completed the re-licensing of all educational establishments of the country by 1 May. However, the university received neither prolongation for the license, nor information about its liquidation. All kinds of activity are illegal without license. According to the university provost Uladzimir Dunaieu, the authorities also applied other means of pressure against the educational institution. For instance, the presidential administration blocked the finances, transferred for education by European grantors. The Council of Ministers of the EU submitted to Belarusian authorities a note of protest. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs refused to express its position. The university staff expressed its conviction that that the mentioned events were related to the attempt of Belarusian authorities to deprive the EHU rector Anatol Mikhailau of his position. We should remind, that in the beginning of 2004 the education minister Aliaksandr Radzkou proposed Mikhailau to retire. That time the rector was defended by Ambassadors of a number of European countries.

On ***7 May*** Dzmitry Salauiou, human rights activist from Navapolatsk, was fined by Navapolatsk Inspection of Dues and Taxes. On 5 May he received a telegram summoning him to the inspection. The fine was imposed because Salauiou refused to let the representatives of the tax inspection into his office. The violation report reads: “On 9 April Salauiou didn’t allow control measures and find out whether any kind of commercial activity was conducted in the room, which the owner calls “Dzmitry Salauiou’s Office.” The tax officers intended to conduct unscheduled routine check-up concerning “receipt of money from customers (clients), providing services, etc”. The human rights activist refused to let the officials in, stating that he didn’t carry out any economic activity and made no financial operations.

On ***7 May*** the action “We Remember”, devoted to the fifth anniversary of disappearance of Iury Zakharanka, took place in Kastrychnitskaia Square in Minsk. At that time a group of youngsters from the fascist organization Russian National Unity (RNE) appeared there, wearing swastikas. The lawyer of the Human Rights Center Viasna Valiantsin Stefanovich seized one of them and led him up to a policeman. The policeman refused to detain the RNE member, only advised him to hide swastika under his coat. On the other hand, police often detains members of opposition movements for unregistered symbols.

On ***7 May*** five years passed since the disappearance of the former minister of internal affairs of Belarus Iury Zakharanka. Every year the people who want to know the truth about what happened to well-known Belarusian opposition activist Iury Zakharanka, former minister of internal affairs of Belarus, member of the political council of the United Civil Party, gather in Kastrychnitskaia square in the evening of 7 May. He disappeared seVieral hundred meters from his house. Nothing is known about fate. This disappearance became the first in the chain of enigmatic incidents that took place in Belarus. In September 1999 the acting head of the Supreme Soviet of the 13th Convocation Viktar Hanchar and his friend, businessman Anatol Krasouski disappeared, in July 2000 – the ORT cameraman Dzmitry Zavadski. This time people with posters and portraits of Iu. Zakharanka and other missing persons came to Kastrychnitskaia Square as usual. Actions under the slogan “We Remember” took place in other cities of Belarus as well. During the action in Navapolatsk the police detained nine persons and composed reports for violation of part 1 of article 167.1 (participation in unauthorized action) against eight of them. The picketing took place in the center of the city, in the Budaunikou Square. The action participants held portraits of the missing persons.

Among the detainees there were:

1. Viktar Mudrou
2. Dzmitry Salauiou
3. Valiery Shauchenka
4. Ihar Sukharukau
5. Aliaksiei Trubkin
6. Aliaksandr Tsiarentsieu
7. Ihar Valiaieu
8. Siarhiei Zabrodski.

On ***8 May*** Aksana Novikava was summoned to Minsk Transport Procurator’s Office for familiarization with materials of the criminal action against her. She was charged with

defamation of the President under Art #367 part 2 of the Criminal Code. On 5 April Aksana Novikava handed out leaflets on the central railway station of Minsk. In the leaflets she accused Lukashenka and other officials of involvement in disappearan¬ces of politicians in Belarus and other felonies.

On ***10 May*** Navapolatsk City Court postponed the trial of the detained participants of “We Remember” action to 10 May. An advocate came from Minsk to defend them, but the judge postponed the trial “due to the absence of the police witnesses”.

On ***10 May*** Homiel Regional Economic Court didn’t satisfy the suit of the women’s association Initiative against the decision of Homiel District Executive Committee not to register the new legal address of the association in a private house in the settlement of Iaromina. During the preliminary court debates it was found that Homiel DEC and Iaromina Village Soviet adopted this refusal on base of falsified documents and testimonies. The economic court couldn’t decide on the case for a long time. Judge Valiantsina Puhachova explained to the plaintiffs that she couldn’t do it, as the Housing Code didn’t specify whether it was legal to register legal address at living quarters. Judge filed an inquiry to the Chamber of Representatives and received the answer that it wasn’t in their competence to decide. After this, Judge turned aside the suit of the Initiative to the executive committee. Absence of legal address can result in liquidation of the association.

On ***10 May*** the petition for change of restraint, submitted by Mikhail Marynich, former Ambassador and minister of foreign economic relations, was rejected.

On ***11 May*** the eight detained participants of the action “We Re-member” that was devoted to the fifth anniversary of disappearance of the former minister of internal affairs Iury Zakharanka were tried at Navapolatsk City Court. All of them (Viktar Mudrou, Dzmitry Salauiou, Valiery Shauchenka, Ihar Sukharukau, Aliaksandr Tsiarentsieu, Aliaksiei Trubkin, Ihar Valiaieu and Siarhiei Zabrodski) were justified due to absence of corpus delicti. During the trial they were defended by the lawyer of the Human Rights Center Viasna Uladzimir Labkovich and the advocate Aliaksandr Halieu.

On ***11 May*** a swastika and insulting inscriptions were drawn on the monument to the Belarusian writer Uladzimir Karatkievich not far from Lenin Square in Vitsebsk. Officials from Vitsiebsk City Executive Committee stated it is simple teenage hooliganism, whereas opposition considers it as possible manifestations of the activity of Russian National Unity (RNE) fascist organization in the city.

On ***11 May*** Homiel Regional Court heard the suit of the leaders of the Civil Alternative association against the regional Board of Justice. The Justice Board refused to register the Civil Alternative as an NGO. More than 200 citizens of the region were founders of the association. Most of them were members of the liquidated Civil Initiatives NGO. At the hearing representatives of the Justice Board Tamara Stryzhneva and Andrei Mitskievich could not give a reasonable explanation what was wrong with the Statute of the Civil Alternative. They mostly referred to comprehensive dictionaries, some specific logic, and to conclusions of the Republican committee for NGOs registration. They could not even answer why some clauses in the Civil Alternative statute identical to those of the pro-governmental Belarusian National Youth Union (BRSM) were illegal. The plaintiff, head of the unregistered NGO Uladzimir Katsora considers the refusal to register it as politically motivated: "The arguments of the justice board members are grounded on emotions, but not laws. Their motives are purely political. We are in the lead-up to the election. The authorities want to feel safe. Non-governmental organizations will nominate observers. It is a threat for the country's administration. The authorities try to prevent or to liquidate such a threat." During the hearing Judge Lieanora Buiankova warned the founder of the association, one of the plaintiffs, Lieanid Sudalienka. Quite unexpectedly for the plaintiffs, the justice board proposed to attach to the case the letter of seVieral teachers from Dobrush district who had allegedly denied being founders of the organization. Interestingly enough, the letter was not mentioned in the official refusal to register the association. The plaintiffs asked to summon the persons mentioned in the letter as they had their names and signatures in the list of the NGO founders. Judge Buiankova didn't satisfy their motion. On the contrary, she ruled to reject the suit to the Justice board which had refused to register the NGO.

On ***11 May*** in Hrodna KGB investigators searched three democratic organizations. They wanted to find the place where the fly-sheets with a verse which KGB found insulting for president, had been printed. At 3 p.m. KGB officers searched the office of Belarusian Language Society, where the Den newspaper was being prepared. At 7.15 p.m. policemen and KGB workers carried away four system blocks that belonged to the editorial board of the Den. Public gathered to look at it. German journa-lists made photos. The KGB investigator Fiadulau explained to the senior editor of the newspaper Mikola Markievich that members of Belarusian Language Society had allegedly met with Valiery Lievanieuski, head of the strike committee of businessmen, who was detained and imprisoned for distribution of the fly-sheet. On one side of the fly-sheet there was a photo of Lievanieuski, on the other – the verse which the KGB officers found insulting. The investigator is of the opinion that the BLS members could help Lievanieuski in printing the fly-sheet. The searches were also carried out at Belarusian School Society

and Lieu Sapieha Foundation. They didn't confiscate anything at BSS. At Lieu Sapieha foundation they confiscated computer equipment and the book "St. Luka's Land" in Polish translation, by Hrodna poet Alies Chobat.

On ***11 May***, three days before the concert of solidarity with the closed Belarusian Humanities Lyceum, the director of the "Reactor" club Aliaksiei Kuchko stated that the club excluded the concert from its programs. He gave no explanations for it. Well-known Belarusian rock-groups were to have played at the concert. Students of the lyceum sent invitations to Ambassadors, well-known writers, scientists and other people who helped the lyceum.

On ***12 May*** Judge of Minsk Savietski Borough Court Ruslan Kaza-daieu found the head of the United Civil Party Anatol Liabiedzka guilty of violation of part 1 of Article 167-1 of the Code of Administrative Offen-ces (violation of the order for organization and holding of mass measures) during the action Chernobyl Way of 26 April and fined him 100 basic units (1 million 900 thousand rubles).

On ***12 May*** Hrodna Leninski Borough Administrative Commission fined Uladzimir Lievanieuski (son of the head of the nationwide strike committee) 95 000 Belarusian rubles for violation of part 3 of Article 172 of the Code of Administrative Offences (distribution of printed production with no issue data).

In the note, distributed by the press service of Minsk OSCE office on 11 May the documentary Road Nowhere, broadcast on the first national TV channel, was called libeling. The OSCE office urged Belarusian State TV and Radio Company to keep to standards of professional journalism and present the possibility to the film characters to speak on TV. The OSCE office considered this broadcast as an evident attempt to spoil the authority of political opposition on the eve of Parliamentary election. The head of the OSCE office, Ambassador Eberhard Heiken said that the film didn't meet the standards of unbiased presentation of facts and the principles of political pluralism. In the 40-minute film the narration about the present leaders of Belarusian opposition was mixed together with the activity of fascist during World War II.

On ***13 May*** Judge of Salihorsk City Court Aksana Kaliada justified the five members of Salihorsk branch of the United Civil Party Larysa Alieshka, Dzmitry Laryionau, Aliaksiei Prykhodzka, Iauhien Valadzko and Maryia Volchak who took part in the action "We Want to Know the Truth" that was held on 7 May, the fifth anniversary of the disappearance of the former minister of internal affairs Iury Zakharanka.

On ***14 May*** Hrodna Leninski Borough Administrative Commission added three more days to the arrest term of the leader of the nationwide strike committee Valiery Lievanieuski. According to the press-service of the strike committee, the reason was the necessity to investigate certain circumstances. We should remind that Valiery Lievanieuski recei-ved 13 days of arrest for organization of the 1 May meeting in Hrodna.

On ***14 May*** in Mahiliou the police detained head of Mahiliou regional branch of the United Civil Party Uladzimir Shantsau for distribution of the newspaper Vremya. The police took him to the police station and confiscated 100 copies of the newspaper.

On ***14 May*** the primary trade union organization of the workers of radio-electronics, metal procession, car engineering and other industrial branches at Minsk "KBTM-OMO" enterprise in Minsk was forcibly transferred to Belarusian trade union of industrial workers. On 4 May the trade union assembly took place. Members of the trade union disagreed with the proposal of the administration to transfer their organization to the industrial trade union that was loyal to Belarusian authorities. Few days later "KBTM-OMO" director V. Matsiushkou, heads of the enterprise departments and services initiated a trade union conference, to which the loyal delegates were chosen. They voted for the transfer of the trade union organization to the industrial trade union.

On ***15 May*** activists of the Dutch section of Amnesty International collected signatures in Naadtorp under the petition to Belarusian authorities with the urge to start the real investigation of the cases of the missing people. Many people signed the petition and expressed their compassion to Belarusian people and the hope that the situation would change to the better. All in all, 518 signatures were collected.

On ***16 May*** six activists of Zubr movement were detained in Barysau for handing out the unregistered newspaper Nasha Slova, issued by Frantsishak Skaryna Belarusian Language Society. Reports for violation of Article #172 of the Code of Administrative Offences (distribution of production with no issue data) were composed against two detainees despite of the fact that the issue data stood in the newspaper. In three hours all of the detained persons were released.

On ***16 May*** at 8 p.m. the police detained secretary of Brest regional committee of the Party of Communists of Belarus, Mikalai Shykiel. He was detained at the meeting with residents of Rechytsa borough. The police confiscated 10 party leaflets from him. Mikalai Shykiel was taken to Brest Leninski borough board of Internal Affairs, where the report of violation of Article 172 part 3 was drawn up (distribution of printed editions, produced with violation of the established procedure, containing no imprint, or the contents of which is aimed at damaging the state or public order, rights and legal interests of

citizens”). Mikalai Shykiel is former vice-head of Brest criminal police. He was indignant at the actions of his colleagues which he considered to be illegal and malicious and stated that he didn’t do any harm to “state and public order, rights and legal interests of citizens”. He thinks the policemen are committing a crime by executing orders which violate the legislation.

On ***18 May*** Valiery Lievanieuski was put to Hrodna isolation ward for two month on the charges in violation of part 2 of Article #368 of the Criminal Code – public insult of president.

On ***18 May*** Svietach printing press refused to print Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni, which was resumed after a long interval. The newspaper founder Ramuald Ulan had to look for another partner. For some time instead of Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni he published Smarhon publication of Vaukavysk-based Mestnaya Gazeta, On Thursday Svietach printed the last issue of Smarhon edition. The company administration informed Ulan the printing press would not print the paper. Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni was suspended by the Information Ministry 8 months ago. Ramuald Ulan had a new business license and was looking for a company which would print his newspaper. Minsk-based printing press Svietach is infamous for such refusals. Earlier its managers refused to print Den newspaper despite the signed contract. Now the editors print the Den in Smolensk, Russia.

On ***18 May*** Navapolatsk City Court considered Dzmitry Salauiou’s complaint against the decision of Navapolatsk City Executive Committee to prohibit the rally where leaders of the People’s Coalition “5+” intended to participate. The rally was scheduled for April 22. Navapolatsk city authorities banned the rally because the application for its permission allegedly did not contain all the required information. Navapolatsk CEC was represented by the expert of the ideology department Klopava, who had written the text of the official refusal. During the hearing she said the organizers failed to attach the contract with the local board of internal affairs for protection of public order and the contract with the local medical association for rent of an ambulance to the application. However, the law “On mass actions” does not oblige organizers of mass actions to sign contracts with the emergency services and the police. Klopava also claimed the organizers were to clean the place of the event after the rally. However, she did not explain how they would distinguish between the litter left by rally participants and the one which was there before the action. Generally, she wanted to make the action organizers to work as street sweepers. Besides, the text of the refusal contained the obscure phrase “The application did not contain the written undertaking of the organizer

(organizers) or the person (persons) responsible for organization and holding of the mass action to hold the mass action". The law does have such a provision, but it appears to be optional if one carefully reads article 4. In this case the action was organized by Dzmitry Salauiou as a physical person, not on behalf of a party or an organization. Dzmitry Salauiou signed the application, and that was supposed to be enough. It's worth mentioning that the negative reply was sent by mail on 19 April 2003 (as it stood on the seal on the envelope, attached to the case materials), three days before the date of the rally. However, the law demands to notify organizers about prohibition or permission of the action five days in advance. Klopava explained that the letter was put into the post box on 16 April, which seems quite doubtful. During the debates lawyer of Navapolatsk CEC Labanok promised that in future the city administration will take greater care to meet the mailing deadlines. Finally, Judge Piatro Liauchonak decided to reject Dzmitry Salauiou's complaint because it did not contain all the required information, in particular, about emergency services and cleaning of the territory.

On ***18 May*** Belarusian People's Front party filed an honor and dignity protection suit to Minsk Economic Court. The party sued host of "V tsentre vnimaniya" ("In the center of attention") TV show Iury Prakopau. The show was on air on 25 April 2004, the eve of the Chernobyl March. Iury Prakopau made a number of defaming remarks about the party. Eventually, he claimed that in case Vintsuk Viachorka comes to power he will stop all support programs to the victims of Chernobyl disaster. BPF Party demanded the TV channel should disprove the statement. Vintsuk Viachorka intended to sue Prakopau on his own behalf and demand compensation of moral damage from Belarusian TV.

On ***18 May*** Malaryta branch of Belarusian People's Front filed a suit to Malaryta District Court against head of the information department of Malaryta District Executive Committee S. Strok. Mr. Strok made a public statement that during the World War II the BPF supported the fascists. (BPF was created in 1988, 43 years after the end of the war).

On ***18 May*** Mikola Markievich filed a complaint to Hrodna Regional Procurator's Office against the actions of Hrodna Regional KGB Board. A week ago KGB searched the office of Hrodna branch of Belarusian Language Society taking away documents and equipment. Mr. Markie-vich, head of the BLS branch and editor of Den newspaper stated the KGB agents grossly violated the law during the search. He demanded to return the seized equipment and to punish the persons guilty. The complaint to Hrodna regional procurator Vasil Litvinau listed a number of violations made by the KGB officers. Mikola Markievich pointed at the difference between the stated aim of the search and real actions of the group. The search was made in the framework of the criminal case on distribution of "anti-presidential" fly-sheets on 7 May. However, the KGB workers were

mostly interested in the files that were created after this date. “It makes me think that during the search they pursued goals that weren’t related to investigation of the criminal case. Possibly, the KGB officers wanted to hinder my professional activity”, — said the Den editor-in-chief.

On ***18 may*** Minsk Transport Procurator’s Office rejected Aksana Novikava’s petition to stop the criminal case against her. This ruling was issued by Iury Nadolski, senior investigator of Minsk Transport Procurator’s Office. Simultaneously, he ruled to pass the criminal case against Novikava to Minsk transport procurator so that he could direct it to court.

On ***19 May*** Belarusian Helsinki Committee organized a round table on the topic “Resolution of the UN Commission on Human Rights and PACE about human rights in Belarus – new tasks and possibilities”. The round table was attended by representatives of regional branches of BHC and other human rights organizations, such as Human Rights Center Viasna, Independent Society of Legal Research and Legal Assistance to Population. All of them, except BHC, have been liquidated. The organizers invited a representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, but the Ministry ignored the event. Advisor of the UN representative in Belarus Uladzimir Shcherbau, Ambassador of France in Belarus Stephane Chmelewsky and head of the OSCE office in Minsk Eberhard Heiken made presentations at the round table. The speeches of Mr. Chmelewsky and Mr. Heiken were quite sharp and fully corresponded to the Resolutions recently passed by the UN and PACE. The round table participants discussed the position of human rights organization and their activities in light of the UN and PACE Resolutions. Belarusian human rights activists discussed what their organizations should focus on. The round table participants adopted a resolution on the results of their work.

On ***20 May*** Uladzimir Iurchak, operation inspector of Slonim Financial Police was made financially responsible for illegal treatment of Mikhail Varaniets, chair of Will for Development NGO. At the end of March 2004 Mikhail Varaniets was summoned two times by Slonim financial police lieutenant Uladzimir Iurchak. The inspector wanted to clarify the situation regarding the NGO’s “failure to pay” taxes under the TACIS project. During the conversation Iurchak made a number of violations: he failed to explain Mr. Varaniets his rights, applied psychological pressure against him, used threats, etc. Iurchak used the information he received during the preliminary investigation to press charges against Varaniets for “tax evasion”. On 23 April the criminal case against Varaniets was initiated. On 22 April Mikhail Varaniets complained against Iurchak’s actions to the Board of Department for Financial Investigation of the State Control Committee of Hrodna

region. On 20 May the head of the Board reported, "Iurchak was made financially responsible for violations of the investigation procedure". "I hope the decision of the regional Board of the Department for Financial Investigation regarding Iurchak is not just a forced reaction to my complaint, but a principled position", commented Mikhail Varaniets.

On ***20 May*** the police detained two Zubr activists in the town of Hlybokaie for posting of fly-sheets with the logo of the organization. A man, who introduced himself as Ivan Hienadzievich, asked them about the origin of the printed production and the plans of the movement. When the detainees refused to answer, he started to threaten them with 15 days of arrest.

On ***20 May*** an activist of BSA from Navapolatsk was summoned by the dean of the engineering-building department of Polatsk State University Bakatovich to his office. There the dean asked her about the activities of BSA, the number of its members at different faculties, the sources of financing and the upcoming "Unvarnished Student Truth" action. The dean also asked the girl to bring him BSA statute to find more about the organization. He also told she could have troubles for her activity. It's worth mentioning that the dean was appointed to his position only two weeks before.

On ***20 May*** two activists of the unregistered youth movement Zubr were detained while handing out the Supratsiu newspaper. The police took Artur Haidukievich and Iulia Harachka to Minsk Tsentralny Borough Board of Internal Affairs and confiscated the newspaper copies.

On ***20 May*** the Ministry of Education expressed its intention to increase the control of the employment of the graduates of state higher educational establishments educated free of charge. It was decided to either deprive the graduate of his diploma in the case he/she refused to work in the place to which he/she was distributed or make the graduate return the money spent on the education. Aliaksandr Zhuk, first vice-minister of education said that this decision was taken on presidential order. At that time the aVierage state expenses for the education of a student in Belarusian state educational establishment were about 1 200 US dollars per year.

On ***24 May*** the leaders of the People's coalition 5+ urged the authorities to stop repressions in Hrodna. In their special statement they condemned the KGB actions towards activists of Hrodna branch of Leu Sapeha Foundation, Batskaushchyna cultural and educational fund, journalists of Den and the web-paper Pahonia. The statement listed facts of lawless searches in private flats, confiscation of newspapers, computer discs and documents. "We express our decisive protest against the haunting of members

of democratic parties and public organizations and Hrodna journalists as well. We demand to stop the lawless actions and to return the confiscated property to the owners," – reads the statement.

On ***24 May*** Paviel Marynich, son of Mikhail Marynich (former minister and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, arrested by KGB) demanded to return the computers that were confiscated after the arrest of his father. He motivated the demand with the fact that the confiscated computers had nothing to do with the charges, given to Mikhail Marynich.

On ***24 May*** the leader of United Civil Party Anatol Liabiedzka was interrogated at Minsk City Procurator's Office on the criminal case about defamation of president. The case was brought under Article #367 of the Criminal Code concerning the interview of A. Liabiedzka to Zerkalo program on Russian TV channel RTR. In this interview Anatol Liabiedzka criticized Aliaksandr Lukashenka. According to Liabiedzka, the investiga-tor asked a number of questions, a part of which the suspect managed to answer. He said that the rest he would answer after receiving additional information from the Ministry of Finances and the government. The questions concerned the money that, according to experts, were put into "gray" budget and were not subject to public and parliamentary control.

On ***25 May*** the under aged Maksim Hromau and Katsiaryna Klimko were detained in the evening of 25 May near Iakub Kolas Square. Maksim Hromau was beaten during the detention. The police composed reports for violation of Article #143 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Belarus (violation of sanitary norms). Then Maksim Hromau registered the beating and was going to apply to prosecutor's office against the illegal actions of the police. However, in the morning Maksim Hromau and Katsiaryna Klimko were taken to the police again.

On ***25 May*** Barauliany Village Executive Committee set aside its decision to establish the volunteer brigade for guarding the Kurapaty memorial. The officials stated that the decision didn't conform to the ruling on such brigades. It's worth reminding that at first the Barauliany VEC agreed with the proposal of Minsk Regional organization of Belarusian People's Front to establish the brigade. The need to guard the place of the mass burial of the victims of Stalin's repression arose because of numerous acts of vandalism and cases of grave digging. However, when guards from BPF, Zubr and Belarusian Freedom Party came to patrol the wood, the police showed them another document. Piotr Lapshyn set aside his own decision. He motivated it with the fact that none of the guard lived and worked on the territory that was under the jurisdiction of Barauliany VEC. The head of

the brigade Uladzimir Kishkurna said they would patrol Kurapaty despite the decision of the authorities.

On ***25 May*** the court left the restraint to Valiery Lievanieuski, chair of the strike committee of businessmen, unchanged. Valiery Lievanieuski and his advocate Aliaksandr Birylau complained against the restraint to the accused (two months in isolator – the time, given to Hrodna Leninski Borough Procurator's Office for investigation).

On ***25 May*** the investigators of the criminal case against Mikhail Marynich rejected a number of bails, submitted by well-known Belarusian activists with the request to release Marynich from the investigative isolator and change the restraint. Personal bails were submitted by Uladzimir Hancharyk, former judges of the Constitutional Court Valiery Fadzieieu and Mikhail Pastukhou, chair of Alternative 21 association Siarhiei Balykin, senior editor of Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta Sviatlana Kalinkina and Professor Hiaorhi Lepin. At the same time, the deputies of Respublika parliamentary group Valiery Fralou, Uladzimir Parfianovich, Siarhiei Skrabiets and the deputy Uladzimir Navasiad submitted next bails. Liudmila Hraznova collected signatures of 32 European politicians from European movement association under the demand to free Mikhail Marynich and stop the persecution of opposition politicians, public associations and independent mass media.

On ***May 26*** the court hearing on the complaint of youth NGO Vieras was over. Vieras activists did not manage to contest the warning, issued by the Department of Justice of Vitsiebsk region Executive Committee in the court. The warning was made after a three months long check up of the organization's activities. One more fact, considered by the Depart-ment of Justice as violation of the legislation, was creation of a structural sub-division of the NGO – a charitable Local Volunteer Centre. During the court procedure head of the youth NGO Iaraslau Mantsevich rejected all the accusations of the Department of Justice, referring to the fact that the organization was implementing all the provisions of their own Statute and the Belarusian legislation. The chief expert of the Department of Justice Valiery Shutau did not agree with the position of the plaintiffs and gave his reasons for all claims mentioned in the warning. Let us remind you in the end of March Vieras received the first warning issued on the result of the 3-months long check-up. Members of the NGO are sure that the legal check-up of their activities was recommended by the staff of the Information Department of the city Executive Committee. Most probably, they were unhappy about the results of the round table on international relations held within the project "Equality. Tolerance. Respect". Observers pointed out that the court hearing looked like a trial over Vieras. That's why the decision of Judge Tatsiana Parfionava was not a surprise. The judge upheld the warning to Vieras.

Vieras stated that the case was not considered in a proper way and they were going to complain about the warning to the Supreme Court of Belarus.

On ***26 May*** the flat of the ex-head of the youth NGO Civil Forum Ivan Niavierau was searched by unknown persons who introduced themselves as police officers. He learned about that only in a week, on his return from Vilnius, where he took part in a school for campaign managers. Mr. NiaVierau said that it was his mother who opened the door to 4 people, two of them in police uniform and two others in plain clothes. They said they were looking for a tool used by her son for car hijacking. They showed her a search warrant with the correct address, but wrong surname. "My mother couldn't say no to them. One of them kept his foot in the doors, and the others repeated the search is done "for the sake of investi-gation», — Niavierau explained. According to Mr. NiaVierau, the search lasted for about an hour. One of the Niavieraus' neighbors who is an alcohol addict was invited as a search witness. "Even if she was sober, she couldn't see everything: there were four persons in the flat and they freely moved around the rooms of the flat." Ivan NiaVierau's mother pointed out that the strangers were most interested in her son's books and the information on his computer as well as the statute documents of the political party "Liberty and Progress" he was working to create. Ivan Niavierau applied to the Board of the Internal Affairs of Homiel Regional Executive Committee to find out whether the person whose name was on the search report really worked there. He was told that they had an employee with that name. Then he applied to Hrodna Chyhunachny Borough Procurator's Office, but procurator Ivan Lashkin rejected his application and said that the search could be carried out by secret services. "To my mind, they tried a new kind of "clear-up", for a wider use in the run-up to the parliamentary election", — commented NiaVierau.

On ***26 May*** Hrodna Court administrative commission ruled to con¬fiscate the Den newspaper print-run and fine the newspaper's editor-in-chief Mikola Markievich USD 10. The Commission decided the senior editor is guilty of illegal distribution of the printed edition (Article #172 part 3 of the Code of Administrative Offences). According to Article #172, it is illegal to distribute publications produced with violation of the established order, publications without publishing information, and publications which can damage the state or public order, rights and legal interests of the citizens. The police claimed one of the articles published by Den is potentially dangerous. The article contained the opinion of the head of entrepreneurs' strike committee Valiery Lievanieuski, who was reflecting upon the possibilities of civil protest. Mikola Markievich considered the claim groundless, because he does not deal with distribution of the newspaper. Moreover, the newspaper was not distributed, since the print-run had been seized before its delivery to

distributors. By the way, the police seized the print-run of Den near the town of Iuie on April 7. However, the report was drawn only on April 29. According to Markievich, the newspaper met all the requirements of the Law on Press. The issue had all publishing information in place. The newspaper contents damaged neither the public order nor the rights of the citizens. Mr. Lievanieuski's opinion did not contradict the Constitution and contained no call for unlawful actions. According to vice-chairman of the Belarusian Association of Journalists, lawyer Andrei Bastuniets, the charges against Mikola Markievich were based on the Code article irrelevant to mass media activity. Article #172 provides for responsibility for violating regulations of distribution of leaflets and the like. Responsibility for violation of the legislation on mass media is determined by Article #172-1. "According to Article #25 of the Law on Press and Other Mass Media, complete or partial confiscation of a print-run can take place only on the basis of court decision. In the case of Den newspaper, it turned out that by deciding to confiscate the print-run, the administrative commission had practically cancelled the power of the Law on Press," – says Andrei Bastuniets. Mikola Markievich intended to file with court a complaint against the Commission's decision. The commission which had ruled to fine Markievich and seize the print-run, was composed of the following people:

Aliena Bahaliubava – chief inspector of the social security department of the Hrodna Leninski Borough Administration

Alieh Bialinski — executive officer of Hrodna Leninski Borough Administration (head of commission)

Mikalai Hancharenka – chief expert of housing and utilities department of Leninski borough

Ksenia Iankouskaia – executive secretary of the commission

Natallia Karotkina – representative of operation and repairing housing service

Aliaksandr Khilko – deputy head of Hrodna Leninski Borough Board of Internal Affairs.

Sviatlana Koushyk – expert of the economy department of Hrodna Leninski Borough Administration

Maryia Malchanava – head of department of the city Board for hygiene and epidemiology

Aliaksiei Radchanka-Iurechka – head of law and personnel department of Hrodna Leninski Borough Tax Inspection

On ***26 May*** Paviel Sharamiet, a journalist of the ORT Russian TV channel declared the establishment of the Committee of civil defense of Mikhail Marynich. The committee founders are of the opinion that the repression of Mikhail Marynich is the continuation of the actions taken against Viktar Hanchar, Hienadz Karpienka, Iury Zakharanka and other opposition activists. According to Paviel Sharamiet, the committee was established to enhance the resonance of the protest against the political repression in Belarus.

On ***27 May*** Malaryta District Procurator's Office rejected the appeal of the deputy of Malaryta Soviet Uladzimir Maliei to bring a criminal action against Siarhiei Strok. Strok, head of the information board of Malaryta administration, publicly accused BPF (the party Maliei was a member of) of collaboration with the fascists during the World War II. Meanwhile, Belarusian People's Front was established in 1988, 43 years after the end of the WW II. The assemblies in the villages of Struha and Pazhezhyn (Brest region) were initiated by Uladzimir Maliei, reserve major who served in rocket forces for 21 years and now is a member of the BPF. During the assemblies head of the information board of Malaryta District Executive Committee Siarhiei Strok stated that the BPF Party was on the side of the Nazi Germany during the war. Uladzimir Maliei informed the local residents that they have a possibility to use a local referendum to prevent construction of the repository of the radiation-polluted soil from Brest object "802". Siarhiei Strok was the next to take the floor. He said: "I will tell you more: This comrade (if he can be called so) Uladzimir Maliei is a member of the BPF Party. During the World War II, when you were young, it supported the Nazi Germany". In its refusal to bring action against Strok the prosecutor wrote that S. Strok had explained he drew an analogy between the BPF Party and its "ancestors", Belarusian nationalists, in order to "show people who was U. Maliei and what kind of party he represented". (…) Concerning his words that the BPF supported Nazi Germany during World War II he said that he had made a mistake, because it was difficult for him to speak when people interrupted him all the time and, eventually, he did not intend to insult the honor and dignity of U. Maliei".

On ***May 27*** Administrative Commission of Leninski borough of Brest considered the case against Mikalai Shykiel. The secretary of Brest organization of Communist Party was charged with distribution of leaflets of the People's Coalition 5+ – "Five Steps to Better Life". Lawyer Uladzimir Maliei represented Mikalai Shykiel's interests. He presented the evidence that the text on the leaflets did not damage the state order, thus the case was to be dropped for the absence of the corpus delicti. The hearing was repeatedly interrupted by loud calls of the commission member in the uniform of a police major: "Chill out! I suggest a warning! Does it suit you?" Head of the administrative commission Viachaslau Khafizau ruled to punish Mikalai Shykiel with a warning. Khafizau read out

some quotes from the leaflet “Five Steps to Better Life”: “To provide for economic prosperity! To stimulate creation of jobs! To refuse from the self-isolation policy!” and answered: Don’t the authorities do it already? Is Belarus isolating itself? Of course you are damaging the state order! Your leaflet is directed against consolidation of society and against the government!” Mikalai Shykiel did not agree with the punishment and planned to complain against it in court.

On ***27 May*** the authorities brought charges of damaging state property (Article #341 of the Criminal Code) against Maksim Hromau and Ka-tsiaryna Klimko who were detained in the evening of 25 May while writing “Free Marynich!” slogan on the public transport stops in Minsk.

On ***28 May*** the editors of Mestnaya Gazeta, independent newspaper from Vaukavysk, were informed that Svietach printing press had termi-nated the contract with them. The official reason is financial debt of the newspaper, reports press service of the Belarusian Association of Journalists. On 26 May the printing press was supposed to print the last issue of the newspaper. However, that day Mestnaya Gazeta senior editor Andrei Shantarovich received a phone call from Siarhiei Charhi-nets. The Svietach director of operations claimed he could not permit printing one of the articles and suggested it should be replaced by another one. He meant the article about corruption in Vaukavysk taxation committee. Shantarovich refused to replace the article. He suggested the printing press to leave a blank space on the place of the article. In an hour the director of operations called back with the news that the issue would not be printed at all. Mestnaya Gazeta senior editor had already contacted a number of printers in Minsk, Baranavichy, and Slonim, but their management refused to provide printing services to the newspaper. Svietach printed Mestnaya Gazeta for almost 12 months. Shantarovich believes the main reason for contract termination was a series of critical articles about the work of the tax inspectorate The first article came out the week before. According to Shantarovich, since his newspaper appeared in 2001, the local state newspaper has experienced significant drops in circulation. “Obviously, the authorities fail to implement the “ideological program”, and decided to use other methods to fight for readers”, Shantarovich summed up.

On ***31 May*** Katsiaryna Klimko’s mother was summoned to the peda-gogical college where her daughter studied. Nadzieia Mienshchykava proposed her to take away the daughter’s documents from the college on the end of the summer exam session and threatened to remand the student from the college otherwise. The following day Ivan Stashulionak, vice-head of the college on educational work, spoke to Katsiaryna Klimko to confirm Menshchykava’s decision.

On ***31 May*** the Supreme Court board for civil cases (judges Babkova, Sakalouskaya and Samaliuk) considered the protest of the Supreme Court deputy chair Vyshkevich. The board ruled to cut down the amount of compensation journalist of Narodnaia Volia Maryna Koktysh and ex-TV host Eleanora Iazerskaia were to pay to Iahor Rybakou. Rybakou, former head of the Belarusian TV Company was charged with abuse of power. The moral damages were cut down from 3 million to 1 million rubles for both Koktysh and Iazerskaia. The deputy head did not ask to decrease the amount of compensation from the editors of the Narodnaia Volia. The editors had to pay 50 million rubles (appr. USD 25 000), which put the newspaper on the verge of survival.

On ***31 May*** the College Board for civil cases of the Supreme Court considered the complaint against the verdict on the cases Iahor Rybakou vs. Narodnaia Volia. The College Board reduced the fines to the journalist Maryna Koktysh and the former TV host Eleanora Iazierskaia to 1 million rubles instead of 3. The fine to Narodnaia Volia remained unchanged – 50 million rubles. We should remind that Iahor Rybakou sued the news¬paper and the journalists in 2003, when he was the chair Belarusian State TV and Radio Company. He considered that the interview with Eleanor Iazerskaia, published in Narodnaia Volia in 2002, his honor and dignity were insulted. The TV host said that his rule turned the TV in ruins and called the names of the people in whose death she blamed the TV administration. Minsk Leninski Borough Court partially satisfied Iahor Rybakou’s suit. In two month Minsk City Court even increased the fine sums during the consideration of the complaint. In the beginning of 2004 Iahor Rybakou was arrested on suspicion in power abuses and bribery and was kept in the investigative isolator of KGB. Iosif Siaredzich, was dissatisfied with the decision of the college board and said he would complain to the UN Committee on Human Rights.

JUNE

On ***1 June*** Maksim Hromau's parents were called by director of Minsk Light Industry College Zhurauskaia. The director informed his parents that soon the college administration would consider the issue of Maksim's expulsion and also suggested their son should quit the studies himself. The month before the administration of Baranavichy Light Industry College tried to remand Mikita Sasim. However, seVieral actions in Mikita's support forced the administration to reverse the decision.

On ***1 June*** the customs officers confiscated 14 copies of the program of Young Belarus bloc and the same number of the bloc's political reform project from Iauhien Skochka, vice-chair of Young Front. According to Skochka, the officers did not like the point about the change of the authorities in Belarus contained in the program. The Young Front member was on a bus to Vilnius together with his friends. They were going to Lithuania to participate in a seminar. While the customs officers examined Mr. Skochka's belongings, the bus rode off. Skochka had to get to Vilnius on his own.

On ***1 June***, the morning after the graduation prom the lyceum teachers, students, and their parents gathered in Kirau Street near the lyceum building. Lyceum principal Uladzimir Kolas thanked everybody. Franak Viachorka, 3rd year student, head of Students' Council said that everyday 5-7 people would watch the lyceum building and if they saw any attempts to destroy it again, they would alarm the others in order to organize protest actions. Franak Viachorka expressed everybody's hope that in the future they would be able to come back and have classes in the building. The gathering was closely watched by seVieral dozen of police officers both in plain clothes and uniform. The teachers summed up the students' results of the exams they had taken. Students received better grades at the exams they took in ordinary schools as external students than the grades they got at internal lyceum exams. The lyceum was going to hold admission exams. In spite of the extreme circums¬tances, many parents let their kids study at the lyceum.

On ***1 June*** Belarusian Helsinki Committee sued Tax Inspection in Minsk Economic Court Minsk Maskouski borough tax inspection insisted BHC was to pay USD 75,000 of taxes and fines. The BHC activists considered the claims of the tax inspection ungrounded. The procurator's office was after BHC chair Tatsiana Protska and chief accountant Tatsiana Rudkievich. They could face imprisonment and seizure of property for failure to pay taxes. Judge Aksana Mikhniuk heard the case at Minsk Economic Court. She started hearing with the parties clarifying their positions about the failure to pay taxes. The civil defendant, Maskouski borough tax inspection, didn't dispute the BHC

rights to tax exemption. However, the tax inspection representative stated the NGO management failed to go through the formalities in order to be exempted from taxes. “They could have received tax exemption, but have failed to do that. And the reason is their negligence”, she claimed. The tax inspec-tion representative gave an example of an enterprise from Hrodna which went through the appropriate procedure a posteriori, and then got back the taxes it had already paid. Members of Belarusian Helsinki Committee considered this method illegal and unacceptable. BHC referred to the agreement between Belarus and the European Union rendering financial assistance to Belarus under TACIS programs with the obligatory condition of tax exemption. TACIS programs have different goals: they range from construction of customs terminals on the border with the EU countries to the development of civil society in Belarus. Some interesting technical circumstances of the conflict were discovered during the hearing. In particular, it became obvious, that the Russian version of the agreement about financial aid under TACIS program, used by the tax inspection, had significant differences with the English original. The judge announced adjournment of proceedings. During the break a special translator was to prepare his opinion about the translation and translate other important documents.

On ***2 June*** Aliaksiei Liaukovich, activist of youth movement Zubr, was detained at MAZ plant, where he worked as adjuster. Policemen of Minsk Zavadski Borough Board of Internal Affairs refused to inform Zubr press service about the reason for his detention. Aliaksiei managed to make a phone call from his mobile. He said the police did not do any investigative or procedural formalities. He was just sitting at the police station waiting for the police officers to come and explain what was going on. Then Liaukovich was lead to the investigator Iatsyn for interrogation concerning the criminal case, brought against Maksim Hromau and Katsiaryna Klimko for the graffiti “Free Marynich!”. The interrogation lasted for more than two hours and Aliaksiei was let go only after 6 p.m.

On ***2 June*** Iury Bandazheuski was transferred from Minsk prison to the so called settled prison in one of the former military barracks in Hrodna regions. Professor’s wife Halina said, he was deported by train for 3 days. During the trip his belongings were examined three times. The detention regime for Iury Bandazheuski was commuted under the law, because he had already served one half of his 8-year prison term. The penal jurisdiction committee could have commuted his punishment in the beginning of 2004, but put off till summer. After her last meeting with her husband Halina Bandazheuskaia went to France with a big group of Chernobyl children who went there to improve their health. Meanwhile, the civic action in support of Professor Bandazheuski was under way in France. Over 14 thousand people signed the manifest demanding from the Belarusian

authorities to release Bandazheuski and give him the opportunity to return to the scientific community and to continue his research in the sphere of impact of small radiation doses on health. French human rights activists pointed out Mr. Banda¬zheuski had the right to general amnesty recently announced in Belarus. They started sending out e-mails with the subject: Professor Banda¬zheuski is in prison, with the purpose to put additional pressure on the Belarusian authorities. When Mr. Bandazheuski was serving his prison term, he was named an honorary citizen of Clermont-Ferrand, Homiel twin city.

On ***2 June*** the prisoner of the investigative isolator of Minsk KGB Mikhail Marynich received the answer to his request to return 90 000 US dollars confiscated on 24 March, two days before the detention. The investigator wrote that it was impossible, but didn't mention any reasons for it. In his letter the investigator called Marynich "witness". He was really a witness on the case about the forged dollars, but no investigative measures were conducted. Mikhail Marynich and his defenders submitted a complaint to Minsk Tsentralny Borough Court. The former minister asked to set aside the court ruling about his detention, because the charges given to him provided release from custody on written undertaking not to leave the city.

On ***3 June*** the deputies of Belarusian Parliament Valiery Fralou, Uladzimir Parfianovich and Siarhiei Skrabiets went on hunger-strike with the aim to demand amendment of the Election Code. Seven more people joined them:

- 4 June – members of the UCP and the BPF Hienadz Ananieu and Maryna Bahdanovich;
- 5 June – Uladzimir Chyrvonienka;
- 6 June – Iury Istomin;
- 7 June – Uladzimir Radzivonchyk;
- 8 June – Viktar Ivashkievich;
- 10 June – Uladzimir Tsybulski.

The hunger-strikers stated that the formation of election commissions was to be "open and understandable to every citizen and guarantee the participation of different political parties and movements" Besides, they demanded to abolish the procedure of early voting.

On ***3 June*** the news that local branches of political parties and non-governmental organizations have registration problems with the local authorities came from different districts of Brest region. According to the Election Code, if a party has no registered bodies in a district, it does not have the right to nominate a candidate there. The new re-quirements permitted to register a branch only if the building had only one private

apartment. However, even in this case the applicants were to receive a special permission of the local administration. Head of the justice department of Brest Regional Executive Committee Siarhiei Kulak stated, the registration procedure of political party branches had been adopted in 2000 and had not been amended since. Kulak saw no link between the forthcoming parliamentary elections and registration prob¬lems of party branches. He claimed the regional justice department had no conflicts with representatives of political parties. Meanwhile, growing hindrances to registration were reported not only by Brest social demo¬crats, but also representatives of BPF party and a number of non-govern¬mental organizations.

On ***3 June*** the public association of Hrodna Lithuanians Tevine stated it was not going to take part in the fifth Belarusian feast of national cultures in Hrodna in protest against the actions of the local authorities, who prohibited the celebration of the anniversary of Grunwald battle near the monument to the great prince Vitaut. The application for it was submitted by the Hrodna Lithuanians, Poles and the BPF Party. The authorities answered that it was impossible to permit the celebration because the bridge that lead to the Old Castle (which Vitaut used to own) was in disrepair. The complaint to court had no results either. Algis Dirginchus, Tevine chair said that the association members decided not to take part in the official feast. They think that the authorities don’t have the right to decide what Lithuanians should and what they should not celebrate. Moreover, that the anniversary of Grunewald battle is celeb¬rated by Lithuanians all over the world.

On ***3 June*** the information minister Uladzimir Rusakievich suspended Rabochaia Salidarnasts newspaper for three months. The reason was that the newspaper was twice warned for alleged violations of the law on press by the newspaper. Mikalai Halko, senior editor of the newspaper, found about the warnings on 4 June at the printing house Chyrvonaia Zorka, when he came there to take the circulation of the fresh number. The director of the printing house expressed his regret that he couldn’t print the newspaper and said it also meant financial loss for him. The edition had two founders – Belarusian trade union of automobile and agricultural engineering and Belarusian Labor Party. The warning claimed that on 12 March 2004 the Ministry of Information received the refusal of the trade union from the rights of the founder. According to the officials, in this case Belarusian Labor Party was to have introduced changes into the newspaper’s registration certificate concerning the legal address, which it failed to do. The newspaper editors considered these pretensions groundless, because the question about the change of the legal address was being considered by Minsk City Executive Committee and the documents for it were submitted in March. The case was protracted purposefully, the

officials demanded even to present to them "conception of the newspaper" and then sent the paper that they continued the consideration of the request in connection with new circumstances.

On ***4 June*** Krychau District Court considered the suit of the busi-nessman and public activist Uladzimir Kudrautsau to the local vertical. He spent more than a year trying to register Ulasny Kamientar news-paper. However, Krychau District Executive Committee refused to register the newspaper's legal address. In January the Supreme Economic Court reversed the decision of the district authorities. Nevertheless, the officials didn't react to it and didn't even return the court fee to the plaintiff. As a result Uladzimir Kudrautsau had to apply to court again. Krychau District Court didn't consider the substantial part of the suit. Representative of Krychau District Executive Committee filed the petition that it was impossible to consider this case in district court. The judge agreed that the businessman was to apply to economic court instead. The human rights activist Mikalai Matoranka disagreed with this decision. He said he would complain against it and that he was ready to pass the suit to Mahiliou Regional Economic Court.

In the evening of ***4 June*** Belarusian People's Front, Belarusian Social-Democratic Hramada and Belarusian Labor Party held a meeting in Mahiliou. Mahiliou authorities permitted to conduct it near the recreation house of a factory. More than hundred people took part in it. Mahiliou citizens expressed their protest against the forcible transfer of employees to the contract system. They bounded this step of the authorities with the political situation in the country and the possible referendum concerning the continuation of the presidential powers. The meeting speeches were illustrated with posters and cartoons, made by members of Young Front. One of their slogans, related to the contract system was "Think twice before signing".

On ***5 June*** Uladzimir Chyrvonienka, chair of Hrodna regional orga-nization of United Civil Party, was fined for insubordination to the police. About two months before the police detained Chyrvonienka's car and found there fly-sheets of the People's coalition 5+. They annihilated the fly-sheets and draw a report on Chyrvonienka for insubordination to them, because he didn't allow opening the car in absence of witnesses and without composition of the police report. Viktoryia Prysada, judge on civil cases, considered it a violation and fined Uladzimir Chyrvonienka 133 thousand rubles.

On ***5 June*** in Hrodna the judge Viktoryia Prysada fined 18-year-old Alies Kursievich. The police detained him at 1 p.m. on 4 June together with 17-year-old friend, whom they let go. They found the inscription Zubr made on the wall opposite Hrodna Leninski

borough administration. The judge even didn't ask the guy whether he made the inscription and fined him straight away.

On ***6 June*** journalists of the Russian TV channel REN-TV were de-tained in the center of Minsk while interviewing 2 members of Zubr youth group. BAJ press-service reports, the reporters were detained by special police officers in civil clothes who claimed the camera crew needed permission of the presidential security service for filming in the center of Minsk. REN-TV reporter Elena Slav and cameraman Aliexei Pokrovsky interviewed Zubr activists on Kastrychnitskaia Square near the ONT board. Zubr members Maksim Hromau and Katsiaryna Klimko were talking about the criminal action against them for political graffiti "Free Marynich!" Elena Slav saw two young guys pretending to be curious passers-by. In some time they came closer and showed their riot squad (AMAP) certificates. They claimed it was not allowed to film in the center of Minsk, because of many "restricted buildings" around, and that special permission of the Presidential Security Service is needed. According to Elena Slav, the Security Service officials just laughed when she told them the story. The journalists had credentials from the Belarusian Foreign Ministry. However, the AMAP officers claimed the documents were forged and insisted both the TV crew and the interviewees should come with them to Minsk Tsentralny Borough Board of Internal Affairs. They also detained another Zubr activist Iauhien Afnahiel who observed the incident. In the police station the journalists made numerous phone calls to the Russian consulate, press-service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and other bodies, and were immediately released. Zubr members had to spend about 2 hours in the police station. The police did not press any charges against them. According to the young people, the police officers told them the main reason for their detention was the interview to a Russian TV channel. Elena Slav was pretty sure the AMAP officers had tapping devices and could listen to their conversation from a distance. She was amazed at the undue familiarity of the policemen who refused to tell the journalists their names, saying they were just "Valerka" and "Stasik". Similar incident happened to journalists of another Russian TV channel. TVTs channel reporter Viera Dashkie-vich and cameraman Vladimir Andronov conducted an opinion survey in the center of Minsk (near McDonald's restaurant) about a possible symbol for a Belarusian ruble. AMAP field officers came up to the cameraman to find out what kind of questions he was asking. One of the AMAP officers uttered a threat they would confiscate the film from the reporters if "questions did not correspond to the topic of the program".

On ***7 June*** Minsk Piershamaiski Borough Court (Judge Ananich) dismissed the action of Tatsiana Protska, chair of Belarusian Helsinki Committee, and her husband Dzmitry Kozyr to the National State TV Company and its reporter Iury Prakopau. The plaintiffs

demanded compensation of moral damages for revealing the secrecy of their private life. The ground for the suit was the TV program “In the center of attention” shown by the Belarusian TV in the evening of February 29 and repeated in the morning of March 1. The program, authored by Iury Prakopau, speculated about the incomes and property of some representatives of political parties and NGOs, including Tatsiana Protska and her husband, head of Zabalatstse farm in Smaliavichy district. In particular, the program showed a house and cars allegedly belonging to the family and mentioned a large some of money allegedly received by BHC chairperson as her monthly salary. The plaintiffs demanded 35 million BYR of moral damages each for violation of the secrecy of their private life. According to the plaintiffs, the journalists also distributed false and libelous information (for instance, that they had 15 horse, Jeep and sauna. He also filmed their property without any permission and hinted that it all was bought for foreign money. The plaintiffs presented to court the documents conforming that they had purchased the property legally, at their own expense. Iury Prakopau didn’t take the blame and stated that the program he made conformed to the informational policy of Belarusian TV. “By such a verdict the court practically recognized that the information ventilated in the program is not a private life secret anymore. Thus, incomes and property is no more a secret, but the information for public use! – sums up BHC deputy chairman Hary Paha¬niaila, who represented Protska in court. – It is clear for us today no one can rely on defense of their rights if his interests clash with the interests of an official. Who cares if this right is guaranteed by the Constitution?”. Nevertheless, the plaintiffs intended to complain against the verdict to the College Board of Minsk Piershamaiski Borough Court.

On ***7 June*** ambassadors of the EU countries: Poland, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Sweden, Germany, and Great Britain visited members of the Respublika parliamentary group and UCP activists who had announced a indefinite hunger strike. The same day the protesters were also visited by head of OSCE office in Minsk and representatives of the People’s Coalition Five Plus, as well as a group of businessmen. They all expressed their support and understanding of the protesters’ demands. The EU countries ambassadors had a 1-hour conversation with the protesters. Ambassador of France Stephane Chmelewsky addressed MPs Valiery Fralou, Uladzimir Parfianovich and Siarhiei Skrabiets saying they share the purposes of the hunger strike which correspond to European expectations of building democratic Belarus. The same days the protesters were visited by representatives of the businessmen initiative Perspective from many cities of Belarus. They expressed their full support to “brave actions of the MPs”. Representa¬tives of businesses from all regions of Belarus will express their solidarity with the hunger strikers by a national strike against the self-will of the authorities which they intended to hold on 17 June. The evening press conference which took place in the

yard of Fralou's apartment building gathered about 50 people. Two protesters – UCP activists Maryna Bahdanovich and Hienadz Ananieu – did not participate. They weren't able to go out of Fralou's apartment, the place of the hunger strike. Outside they might be detained by police and delivered to court to be tried for an attempt to put a tent camp in the same yard on Saturday.

On ***7 June*** the senior editor of the Rabochaia Salidarnasts Mikalai Halko addressed Minister of Information Uladzimir Rusakievich. He asked to revise the decision about three-month suspension of the newspaper. Mikalai Halko believes the infringement made by the editorial board does not deserve such a severe punishment. The newspaper journalists claim they are not going to stop their work and will publish their materials in a newsletter with circulation of 299 copies.

On ***8 June*** the US Ambassador George Krol visited the protesters. In the official press release of the Embassy he called the demands of the hunger-strikers fair. He urged the Belarusian authorities to bring the election legislation and procedures to conformity with the OSCE norms and to observe the civic and human rights of the arrested Mikhail Marynich.

On ***8 June*** strangers started phoning to the flat of Hienadz Ananieu, chair of Vitsiebsk Regional UCP organization who was keeping hunger-strike in Minsk. They wanted to discriminate the details of the private life of his family. According to Hienadz's wife Liudmila Ananieva, it was a result of his participation in the hunger-strike. At first it didn't look suspicious, because the policemen who visited the flat explained that they came "on public signal" that alcohol beVierages were illegally sold there. Later Mrs. Ananieva learned that unknown persons asked the neighbors who lived in the flat, where the Ananieus worked, whether it was a good family and where their child learned. They also asked such questions on the phone. As a result Liudmila Ananieva applied to the lawyer Alieh Hrablieuski. He advised not to open the door to strangers and promised to come to the flat in the case of danger.

On ***8 June*** the international organization Reporters without Borders sent open letter to Belarusian information minister concerning the suspension of the trade union newspaper Rabochaia Salidarnasts. The organization stated that this action was a part of the systematic repression against independent and opposition press. Reporters without Borders reminded that in the yearly report for 2004 they condemned the administrative pressurization of independent press in Belarus. They emphasized that Lukashenka was one of the 37 persons in the list of the press's enemies. According to the report

calculations, more than 10 Belarusian newspapers were persecuted in 2003, more than 15 were suspended and seVieral organizations that defended mass media were closed.

In the evening of ***9 June*** the police of Bialynichy town (Mahiliou region) detained heads of the regional 5+ coalition: Ryhor Kostusieu (Belarusian People's Front), Halina Lisitsyna (Belarusian Labor Party), Uladzimir Shantsau (United Civil Party) and Anatol Zauialau (Com-munist Party). According to Ryhor Kostusieu, they were detained in the yard of the apartment building where they talked to Bialynichy residents. They just arrived there and only managed to hand out seVieral Chas newspaper issues and Five Plus leaflets when the police detained them. The police officers detained Mahiliou activists and took them to a police station "to identify their personalities".

On ***9 June*** the press service of presidential administration reported about the meeting of the President Lukashenka and the authors of the Code of the Administrative Procedure. During the meeting the President suggested that transfer of the majority of administrative cases into courts' jurisdiction was an unreasonable measure. "the authors of the Code did not take into account the fact that a court procedure is more complex than, for instance, a procedure by police bodies; it requires higher costs and more knowledge", — informs the press service of the President, "in reality, such dramatic change of the administrative cases procedure will break the system the citizens of the country got used to". Besides that, the President expressed his concern about the possible overburden of courts with administrative cases. In conjunction with this, Human Rights Center Viasna stressed that only fair trial could really guarantee the rights of the citizens. Members of Human Rights Center Viasna directly participated in the thousands of administrative trials both by courts and non-judicial agencies. They registered blatant and systematic violations of the procedural rights of citizens during the majority of hearings. The out-of-date legislation was one of the causes for this situation. The Code of Administrative Offences, adopted in 1984, is the oldest of the acting Codes. Thus, modern and progressive Code of Administrative Proce-dures, containing the fair procedure of a court trial based on the respect to the rights of citizens, could be an important step forward for Belarus. With up to 5 million cases of administrative violations registered annually, delegating the power to hear administrative cases to executive bodies would create favorable climate for legal willfulness. This might lead to the increase of human rights violations in Belarus. That is why the Human Rights Center Viasna considers the attempt to limit the powers of courts in administrative cases hearing as an ungrounded hazard for the society.

On ***9 June*** Kastrychnitski borough court of Minsk found Aksana Novikava guilty of libeling Aliaksandr Lukashenka and sentenced her to 2.5 years of open-type prison. We

should remind that A. Novikava was detained on 5 April for handing out fly-sheets with Lukashenka's photo, under which the articles, which she believed he had violated, were printed. In court Novikava requested from the state prosecutor to justify his position. She requested to summon Procurator General Viktar Sheiman, ex-procurator General Alieh Bazhelka, minister of Internal Affairs Uladzimir Navumau, ex-minister Iury Sivakou, Dzmitry Paulichenka, Ivan Tsitsiankou, as well as Christos Pourgourides, Aliaksandr Dabravolski and representatives of Gazprom company, so that they could prove Lukashenka's involvement in the crimes she had listed in her leaflet. Besides that, Novikava asked to summon the "victim" of her crime – Aliaksandr Lukashenka. The judge rejected all Novikava's motions. The judge explained she was trying Aksana Novikava, and not Lukashenka. Prosecutor Dyiana Hlushkova did not focus on the text of the leaflet and referred to the presumption of innocence: nobody can call Lukashenka a criminal without a court verdict. This was the only argument of the prosecution. Aksana Novikava's daughter Reata has just turned 3, besides, Aksana expected a baby. It is her second sentence for libeling Aliaksandr Lukashenka. After the trial Paviel Sapielka, Novikava's defense lawyer, filed a complaint to the city court.

On ***10 June*** about 400 people participated in the street action Chain of Concerned Readers in support of the Narodnaia Volia newspaper. At about 6 p.m. hundreds of people lined up in a chain along Skaryna Avenue with copies of independent newspapers in hands. Dozens of police and riot squad officers observed the action. None of the action participants were detained. The people had no slogans or flags and did not make any public speeches. They just stood in a chain with newspapers in hands. Among action participants there were former presidential candidate Uladzimir Hancharyk, litterateurs Nil Hilievich, Uladzimir Niakliaieu, singer Kasia Kamotskaia, chair of Belarusian Association of Journalists Zhana Litvina, human rights activists Liudmila Hraznova, Valiery Shchukin, politicians Iury Khadyka, Andrei Sannikau, Mikola Stat¬kievich, etc. Leaders of the People's Coalition 5+, which was one of the action initiators, did not manage to participate in the action because they had been delayed on Belarus, Lithuania border. Ordinary readers of Narodnaia Volia also came to support the newspaper. Senior editor Iosif Siaredzich went along the whole chain shaking hands and thanking every action participant for support. He told the journalist he would not let the newspaper disappear. At the same time he said he would not pay the compensation to Iahor Rybakou. People in plain clothes regularly reported about the behavior of the action participants. A chain of policemen stood on the other side of the avenue. SeVieral riot police officers "guarded" the "concerned readers" on each side of the square. The action on Kastrychnitskaia Square lasted for about an hour. At about 7 p.m. a significant part of action participants

headed to Kazarmienny Street to personally express support to hunger strikers. The idea of an action emerged when on 31 May the board of the Supreme Court ruled Narodnaia Volia was to pay 50 million BYR (about USD 23 000) to ex-head of Belarusian TV Iahor Rybakou.

On ***10 and 11 June*** in **Vitsiebsk** the police detained Barys Khamaida while A. Lukashenka was taking part in a seminar for the local authorities. The detentions were plainly groundless. The police didn't even compose any reports for violation of public order. When Khamaida asked what for he was detained the police answered “Because you are not glad that Lukashenka has come to the city”. In total, Khamaida spent about 8 hours at the police station.

On ***11 June*** the police detained Anatol Shumchanka, leader of Pers-pective association of businessmen. The police found 330 leaflets calling on entrepreneurs to start a strike in support of the MPs and political activists on hunger strike. Shumchanka was charged under Article #172 of the Code of Administrative Offences

On ***11 June*** Horki district administrative commission fined Dziamian Frankouski, activist of Voters' Club, for spreading leaflets of the People's coalition 5+. The charge was based on the complaint of chairman of Horki Veterans' Union Markouski. He asked the police to look into the activities of local young people who distribute 5+ leaflets. He attached seVieral leaflets without the imprint to his complaint. Besides that, Mr. Markouski demonstrated enviable awareness by pointing out the city distribution coordinator Dziamian Frankouski. As a result the commission ruled to fine Mr. Frankouski 19 000 rubles (about USD 9) under Article #172 part 3 of the Code of Administrative Offences (violation of the procedure of distribution of printed materials).

On ***11 June*** Zhlobin District Court Judge Zoia Lasouskaia rejected the claim of Marat Afanasieu to the administration of metallurgical plant. Marat Afanasieu, activist of the United Civil Party, deputy of the 13th Supreme Soviet sued the plant administration for his discrimination. In March the plant administration issued three penalties to Afanasieu as a head of the bureau during one day, and fired him. Marat Afanasieu considers the actions of the plant administration persecution for political reasons.

On ***11 June*** Valiery Fralou was examined at the national scientific practice cardiology center Doctors registered deviations in the work of his heart that witnessed ischemia and advised him to stop hungering. However, Fralou decided to continue the hunger-strike.

On ***11 June*** Minsk Tsentralny Borough Court didn't satisfy the comp-laint concerning the change of restraint to Mikhail Marynich. The comp-laint was considered with the

doors closed. In an hour judge Hrabouskaia-Daineka ruled to reject the complaint, filed by Marynich's advocate Viera Stramkouskaia. Mikhail Marynich was left in the KGB isolation ward, where he was kept since 26 April.

On ***12 June***, the tenth day of the hunger strike held by MPs Valiery Fralou, Uladzimir Parfianovich and Siarhiei Skrabiets together with UCP and BPF members, activists in Zhodzina, Navapolatsak, and Vitsiebsk joined the hunger strike. In Vitsiebsk 5 activists joined the hunger strike. In Navapolatsk three citizens: Ihar Sukharukau, Aliaksandr Tsiarentsieu and Uladzimir Tsybulski continued the hunger strike in the apartment of the head of Navapolatsak city organization of United Civil Party. In Zhodzina the hunger strike was continued by Dzmitry Chartkou, member of Maladaya Hramada youth NGO. Member of United Civil Party Iryna Valchanina stopped the hunger strike in two days in conjunction with serious deterioration of her health.

On ***14 June*** Minsk Economic court ruled to find out why the tax inspection decided payment of per diems to BHC observers of the parliamentary election-2000 had been ungrounded. Then dozens of BHC observers traveled to the rural polling stations to observe the election. Per diems for the observers were set in the budget of the TACIS grant. Later Minsk Maskouski borough tax inspector considered this money as a profit and must be taxed. BHC head Tatsiana Protska and BHC chief accountant were charged with failure to pay taxes. The proceedings on the suit of BHC against the tax inspection were delayed.

On ***14 June*** Minsk City Procurator's office interrogated the UCP leader Anatol Liabiedzka again. The authorities brought the criminal action against Liabiedzka after he had given an interview to a Russian TV channel. In his interview to Zerkalo show Liabiedzka criticized Lukashenka for creation of the shadow budget, for concealment of the truth about the disappeared politicians and for harboring money from selling weapons. This time the interrogation of the UCP leader lasted for over 2 hours. Anatol Liabiedzka said he had proposed enough materials to the investigation which prove credibility of his statements: "This time I proposed them a package of information which had been publicly voiced by the present Ministers and other top officials in Lukashenka's circle. The documents prove I am not the first one to raise the topic. And the main point, my interview to Zerkalo was based on the statements of Aliaksandr Lukashenka. I think it really had an effect on the investigator. Although I am aware of what power an investigator in Belarus has". Liabiedzka claimed the action against him was politically motivated. He said, besides the documents he provided the investigation with, he had a number of other facts at his disposal which was going to reveal when the case was

brought before the court. Liabiedzka's lawyer Paviel Sapielka didn't exclude the possibility that Liabiedzka would be tried. Although he believed the case should be dropped due to the lack of legal grounds. If the criminal action was brought before the court Liabiedzka could face up to 5 years of prison under Article #367 of the Criminal Code. Social Democrats of other countries supported Anatol Liabiedzka. They have collected seVieral thousand signatures under the demand to stop prosecution of the UCP leader.

On ***12 June*** the efficiency check-up of European Humanities Uni-versity organized by the Ministry of Education finished. The commission that checked the university for 17 days contained 56 experts. During the conclusive sitting the majority of them gave positive comments on the EHU work and the level of the students' knowledge. Despite it, Uladzimir Samusievich, chairman of the commission stated that the university failed to meet the educational requirements. The reason was that during an attestation exam a student of the economic department received an unsatisfactory mark that dragged the aVierage mark of the students lower than the acceptable level. EHU workers stated it was one more action in the fight against the university.

On ***15 June*** Minsk City Court rejected the complaint against the illegal detention of Mikhail Marynich in the investigative isolator of KGB. The defense lawyer Viera Stramkouskaia pointed at the juridical circumstances which the judges were to have taken into consideration. She referred to the Criminal Code according to which the restraint to Mikhail Marynich didn't met the charges given to him. She also enumerated the process violations made by the investigators of the procurator Anatol Liska.

On ***15 June*** Alies Karnienka, 32, an activist of United Civil Party was summoned to Minsk Zavadski Borough Court. The authorities tried to enforce payment of the fine of 1 650 000 rubles (USD 770). Alies Karnienka was fined for organizing a public voting on the third term for Lukashenka, which took place on 7 November 7. Officer of the court Siarhiei Vetashkin reminded Karnienka about the fine. Alies explained he was unemployed and had no money to pay such a high fine. The officer said he would soon come to levy distress.

On ***15 June*** three Zubr activists were detained for spreading printed materials in different places of the city. Aliaksiei Liaukovich and Dzmitry Shchepau distributed leaflets near Kastrychnitskaia subway station. Two riot squad officers took the activists to the backyard of one of the buildings nearby. They stayed there for almost an hour waiting for the police to come. The young people were taken to Minsk Tsentralny Borough Board of Internal Affairs. The police kept them there for one more hour and released the guys

when they had refused to give any written explanation. Another member of Zubr movement, Paviel Iukhnievich, was detained when distributing newspapers at Push¬kinskaia subway station. The next day he had to come to Minsk Frunzienski BBIA and talk to police officer Baruta. The police captain was interested in the political views of the Zubr guy, as well as where he had received the printed materials.

On ***15 June*** Zubr activists Aliaksiei Shydlouski and Aliaksandr Atroshchankau were detained near Kamarouski market in Minsk. The police took them to a police station and confiscated the printed editions they had.

On ***16 June*** Navapolatsk City Court considered the suit of Vadzim Dukhamienka, former head of a shift at Navapolatsk heating station, against his firing. Vadzim Dukhamienka headed the factory unit of Free trade union and was fired on 1 May. The same happened to the members of trade union organization Iury Haichanka and Iury Abukhau. The trial was presided by the chair of Navapolatsk City Court Piatro Liau¬chonak. Mr. Dukhamienka was fired after the enterprise administ-ration refused to prolong the contract to him. However, according to the col¬lective agreement, the administration had no right to fire Vadzim Dukha¬mienka because of his being the chair of the trade union organi-zation and member of other elected organs, including the commission on working arguments. Having considered the case, the court stated that the firing took place not on the initiative of the employer, but because the contract ended, and therefore considered the firing legal.

On ***17 June*** Ronald Noble, Secretary General of Interpol met with high-level state officials in Minsk. He stated that Interpol was searching for the missing Belarusian politicians and proposed to Belarusian police to direct a worker to the central bureau of Interpol for working on these cases. Belarusian policeman could work in the department of organized crimes investigation, search for those who evaded from trial or missing persons.

On ***17 June*** Biaroza Town Court didn't satisfy the complaint of Natallia Akaronka, deputy of Belaaziorsk Town Deputy Soviet. Natallia Akaronka asked to reverse the rebuke to her, as a result of which she was fired. She received the rebuke in November 2003 from the director of the school where she worked. This was the punishment for her participation in the session of the deputy soviet.

On ***17 June*** the public association of Belarusian businessmen Perspective organized the political strike in support of the hungering Respublika deputy group and their followers. According to the busi-nessmen, the action was accompanied with the

pressurization of activists by the authorities. Nevertheless, the majority of salespeople of the largest markets of Minsk, Babruisk, Pinsk, Salihorsk and Polatsk took part in the strike. About 80 thousand people went on strike in 20 citizens of Belarus. In Homiel the police detained Tatsiana Marchanka and Uladzimir Niapomniashchykh for participation in the action and drew reports for violation of part 1 of Article #167 (violation of the order for holding assemblies and meetings).

On ***17-18 June*** the International public hearings "Political Disap-pearances and Extrajudicial Death Penalty in the Republic of Belarus, Russian Federation, and Ukraine. Victims' Defense: International and National Mechanisms" took place. The official organizers of the inter¬national public hearings are the Supreme Rada Committee for Organized Crime and Corruption and Vinnitsa human rights group. The hearings will be attended by PACE Committee for Legal Issues and Human Rights special rapporteur Christos Pourgourides, Tatiana Termacic (Council of Europe), the Supreme Rada commissioner for human rights N. I. Kar¬pachova, head of the Supreme Rada Committee for Organized Crime and Corruption V. N. Stratovich, Sergey Kovalyov and Valentin Gefter (hu¬man rights defenders from Russia), and representatives of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Zinaida Hanchar, Volha Zakha¬ranka, Volha Zavadskaia, representatives of Belarusian human rights organizations and mass media will participate in the hearings from the Belarusian side. The organizers also invited members of the Respublika parliamentary group (Valiery Fralou, Uladzimir Parfianovich and Siarhiei Skrabiets (these deputies weren't able to attend the hearings because of the hunger strike), deputy head of the House of Representatives Uladzimir Kanapliou, head of the Commission for human rights, ethnic relations and mass media Valiery Lipkin, head of the Commission for national security Barys Bikinin.

On ***18 June*** Aliaksandr Vasilieu, vice-chair of the national business¬men's strike committee received the official charges. He was accused in "public insult of president of the Republic of Belarus, accompanied with charged in felony" (part 2 of Article #368 of the Criminal Code). The month before the same charges were given to the chair of the committee, Valiery Lievanieuski, kept in an investigative isolator. At first Aliaksandr Vasilieu was found a suspect on the case and two days later – an accused. In the ruling of the investigator of procurator's office Alfred Tankievich it was stated that "Vasilieu together with his acquaintance Lievanieuski "produced on computer many fly-sheets in Russian in the form of appeal to citizens and distributed them all over Hrodna". The essence of the charges is that the text was plainly insulting to the honor and dignity of president and contained charges in the felony called "abuse of power by a high-level official". Nothing concrete was said about the text of the fly-sheet. In fact, the fly-sheet

contained a satirical poem — the name of the character wasn't mentioned in it. Nevertheless, the investigation stated it was Aliaksandr Lukashenka, because Belarusian word "kiravats" (to rule) was used in the poem. Valiery Lievanieuski was informed about it in the investigative isolator. He was detained before the 1 May meeting at which businessmen demanded Lukashenka's retirement. Aliaksandr Vasilieu called the charges given to him absurd. The restraint used to him was written undertaking not to leave the city.

On ***18 June*** members of Young Front held a picket in support of the deputies who kept on hungering. The picket took place in the center of Brest, near Belarus Movie Theater. The participants held posters "Deputies Fralou, Parfianovich and Skrabiets. They can die. 16th day of hunger-strike". Members of Young Front handed out fly-sheets with detailed information about the demands of the hungering deputies. It was emphasized that the hunger-strikers applied to Belarusian people with the urge to prevent another constitutional overturn and protest against the prolongation of Aliaksandr Lukashenka's presidential powers. The picket lasted for 1,5 hours, the police were absent.

On ***21 June***, after 18 days of protest the deputies Valiery Fralou, Uladzimir Parfianovich and Siarhiei Skrabiets, the hungering activists of Belarusian People's Front and United Civil Party stated they stopped the hunger-strike and proceeded to other ways of struggle for free elections and against injustice. Valiery Fralou said that the hunger-strike brought some results: on 21 June the hunger-strikers received telephone calls from the heads of commission of the Chamber Representatives, who informed that the proposed draft law would be considered the following day. Valiery Fralou, Uladzimir Parfianovich and Siarhiei Skrabiets were going to the parliament to defend their proposals and didn't want their colleagues to treat the hunger-strike as pressure on them. According to Valiery Fralou, among the positive results of the hunger-strike there was the international policy of the action participants and consolidation of the active and constructive forces of Belarus. Siarhiei Skrabiets considered the ignorance of the country's and the parliament authorities towards the demands of the hunger-strikers a negative result of the action. Nobody even paid interest to the state of their health. Another negative result was that the action wasn't mentioned in the state mass media.

On ***21 June*** Navapolatsk City Court considered the complaint of the human rights activist Dzmitry Salauiou against the fine, imposed by Navapolatsk City tax inspection (190 000 rubles). The court decided the case in favor of the human rights activist. We should remind that Salauiou was fined for having not let the tax inspectors into his office. During the trial it was found out that the order for the check-up was invalid. Besides,

there were no legal grounds for the check-up. Judge Albina Bandarchuk ruled to consider the actions of the tax inspectors ineligible, to stop the administrative case against Dzmitry Salauiou and return to him the sum of the fine and also compensate the court fee he had to pay.

On ***21 June*** the journalist Mikhail Podoliak was deported from Belarus to the Ukraine. Journalists, politicians and public figures that gathered at the platform before the departure of the 11.00 “Minsk-Odessa” train were not allowed to say good-bye to the journalist of independent newspaper Vremya who was deported from Belarus. The compartment windows were thoroughly closed and only state TV channel operators were allowed into the compartment to Mr. Podoliak. The ground for Podoliak’s deportation was “him being organizer of publishing of Vremya newspaper where the articles were published that contained calls to consolidation of radical opposition with the purpose to counteract state organs that may lead to destabilization of civil accord and political situation in Belarus”. This decision was taken in accordance with point 2 of article 25 of the law “On legal status of foreign citizens and persons without citizenship that reside on Belarusian territory” and Regulations on deportation procedure of foreign citizens and persons without citizenship. The journalist is forbidden to come to Belarus for 5 years. Mr.Podoliak’s wife Iryna (Belarusian citizen) said to the people present at the train station that approximately at 7 a.m. on 21 June someone began to ring insistently at the door bell. When they opened the door, 8 people came in – policemen and people in civil clothes, one person with video camera. They gave 15 minutes to the journalist to collect personal things, ordered to take some money with him and took Podoliak away in unknown direction. Iryna didn’t say anything about further plans of their family – they didn’t have time to discuss that with the husband. She said that Mikhail’s parents live in Ukraine but she didn’t specify in which district. Meanwhile, Mikhail Podoliak is the third foreign journalist, deported from Belarus during the last years.

On ***21 June*** in Minsk the flat of Maryna Koktysh, Narodnaia Volia journalist, was robbed. The thieves stole her money and the valuables. They also looked through all the professional notebooks of the journalist and tore one of them.

On ***21 June*** about fifty pupils of Iakub Kolas National Humanities Lyceum held a picket in Frantsysk Skaryna Avenue. In the afternoon they came to the gate of the closed lyceum, stood there for seVieral minutes and then went to Skaryna Avenue. They ranked along the avenue from “Patio-Pizza” restaurant to Kastrychnitskaia Square, holding such posters as “We need our building back”, “Children are not biomass”, “Return our lyceum!”. SeVieral parents joined the action. The police warned they would detain the children next time they would picket in that place.

In the morning of ***22 June*** the correspondent of Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) Iury Svirko was detained near the House of the Parliament. He tried to get to a session of the Chamber of Representatives. He had official accreditation, but the police stopped him at the entrance. Iu. Svirko showed the laissez-passer with the seal of the security service and the note “valid till 31 December 2004” together with the registration of Radio Liberty at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, valid till 9 April 2005. Having seen the name of the radio, the guard in the presidential security uniform said he would not let the journalist in. The correspondent turned his Dictaphone on and asked why. The guard grabbed the Dictaphone and ran out. Then people in plain clothes seized Svirko and pushed out of the building. The guard erased the recording and only then gave it back. The chair of the OSCE mission in Minsk Eberhardt Heiken and the head of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegation Uta Zapf witnessed the incident. Mrs. Zapf said she had never seen such things. Iu. Svirko tried to enter the building once again, but an unknown person in plain clothes confiscated both credentials, saying they were invalid and ordered him to get out. When the journalist asked him to show his documents, six people in plain clothes ran towards Iu. Svirko and pulled to the police car with MH 0773 number. In the car they prohibited to the journalist to phone and answer to telephone calls. The head of the group asked the journalist where he lived. “We’ll drive you there”, — he promised. – “And will take no money for it. Think it is taxi.” Iury Svirko said he lived in Engels Street and the car drove him to the editorial office of Narodnaia Volia newspaper.

On ***22 June*** the Chamber of Representatives declined the amend-ments to the Election Code that were proposed by the deputy Valiery Fralou. The amendment of the Election Code was one of the demands of the hunger-strikers. Only 8 members of the Chamber of Represen-tatives supported the draft law, 71 deputies voted against it. The discussion lasted for three house, 32 deputies took part in it.

On ***22 June*** Hrodna Regional Economic Court started the trial on the complaint of the public association Will for Development to the tax inspection. Will for Development demanded to set aside the decision of the inspection to exact from the organization the means that were received within the limits of the TACIS technical support. At the trial it was found that KGB had direct relation to the “TACIS case”. Judge Alieh Kadach declined the petition to attach documents of the BHC case that was considered by Minsk Economic Court to the case of Will for Development. He also refused to attach the expert conclusion of a specialist of Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry concerning the text of the international agreement that regulates the issue of means on TACIS programs. In its turn, Slonim tax inspection explained to the court the check-up of the organization by the wish of local KGB.

On ***23 June*** Belarusian Helsinki Committee won the trial with Minsk Maskouski borough tax inspection. The court ruled to reverse the decision about the exaction of about 70 thousand dollars of taxes from BHC. Nevertheless, the criminal case against BHC leaders wasn't closed. Minsk Economic Court, judge Aksana Mikhiuk ruled to completely satisfy the suit of Belarusian Helsinki Committee to Minsk Maskouski borough tax inspection. The judge reversed the decision of the tax inspection and also ruled to exact from the inspection 190 thousand rubles of the court fee that human rights activist had to pay when applying to the court. The representative of the tax inspection couldn't answer the question whether the inspection was going to complain against the verdict to the Supreme Economic Court.

On ***24 June*** at 7 p.m. three Navapolatsk activists of the People's Coalition 5+ were detained while distributing leaflets against the third term:

1. Ina Barysievich, member of Navapolatsk Belarusian Students Association
2. Dzmitry Salauiou, human rights activist
3. Aliaksiei Trubkin, member of BPF party

They were detained at Navapolatsk City Board of Internal Affairs for two hours. The police confiscated fly-sheets from them, but drew up no administrative reports, except for the report confirming the confiscation of fly-sheets from Dzmitry Salauiou. However, they didn't give to him a copy of this report.

On ***24 June*** wife and children of Valiery Lievanieuski were sum-moned to Hrodna Leninski Borough Procurator's Office as witnesses in the criminal case of public insult of president Lukashenka. The defendant in the case was Valiery Lievanieuski, head of entrepreneurs' strike committee, and his deputy Aliaksandr Vasilieu. The procurator's office investigator informed the Lievanieuskis they had the right not to testify against their father. Lievanieuski's wife Maryna, sons Dzmitry and Uladzimir, and daughter Katsiaryna used this possibility and refused to give evidence.

On ***24 June*** in Minsk two activists of Zubr movement were detained for posting stickers with the number of the contact pager and Zubr logo on the news pillars. The police patrol detained them in Bahdanovich Street and took to Minsk Savietski Borough Board of Internal Affairs. There they were kept for about an hour. Then one of them was driven to the nearest police station, where the police composed reports under Article #143 of the Code of Administrative Offences (anti-sanitation). He was released only at 12 p.m. During the time of the detention the police refused to give any information to other activists of the movement who waited for the detainee at the entrance.

On ***25 June*** three Zubr activists were detained near Belarusian Culture University for the distribution of the 9th issue of Supratsiu informational bulletin. The police detained them at the underground pedestrian crossing, drove to the police station in Sviardlou Street and detained them there for three hours.

On ***25 June*** Vitsiebsk regional Executive Committee considered eligible the refusal of Navapolatsk City Executive Committee to register the structures of Free Trade Union of Belarus. Navapolatsk-Polatsk regional organization of the Free Trade Union of Belarus and its primary units at Naftan open joint-stock company spent almost a year trying to get registered by the local authorities. The trade union lost its juridical status as a result of re-registration. In 2004 the trade union activists submitted the documents for registration seVieral times. Nevertheless, Navapolatsk City Executive Committee refused to register the organization due to alleged problems with the documents. In his letter to the chair of the Free Trade Union of Belarus Hienadz Bykau Viktar Pranik, chair of the justice board of Vitsiebsk Regional Executive Committee, stated the executive committee had taken its decision in accordance with the demands of the present legislation.

On ***25 June*** the detention of Mikhail Marynich was prolonged for two more months together with the term for the investigation of his case. Marynich's defense lawyers expressed their intention to complain against this decision to court.

On ***25 June*** in Strasbourg the session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe came to an end. The plenary sitting of the ses-sion didn't consider the question of Belarus. However, outside the session hall members of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights consulted with the Committee on Human Rights of the parliamentarians of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, a member of which is the Chamber of Representatives of Belarus. As a result PACE and the Inter-Parliamentary Union intended to adopt a joint declaration on the case of the kidnap of Viktar Hanchar with the demand to dismiss Procurator General Viktar Sheiman from the occupied position. The second main event in Stras-bourg became the discussion of the results of the report of Mr. Pour-gourides on the missing persons with the executive organ of the Council of Europe. The cabinet of ministers asked the Committee secretariat to prepare the proposals that could be considered at the next session.

On ***25 June*** the Ministry of Justice filed the liquidation claim against Belarusian Labor Party to the Supreme Court. The leader of the party Aliaksandr Bukhvostau and his colleagues from the People's Coalition 5+ stated it was the beginning of the clearing of the political field before the parliamentary election. The state information agency BelTA was told by the press service of the ministry, Belarusian Labor Party had allegedly

violated the legislation on the issues of legal addresses of its structures in Vitsebsk, Hrodna, and other regions. The party was also accused of providing inaccurate data, ignoring the requests of the Ministry and other "gross violations". Aliaksandr Bukhvostau listed the following claims of the ministry: "they have raised the issue that out party is a member of the People's Coalition. We made a clarification that it was not the party, but party members planning to participate in the election were members of the coalition. The party, as an entity, does not belong to any unregistered coalitions. They also incriminate spreading the platform of the unregistered coalition and signature of the letter in support of Narodnaia Volia. I think they are using our party to polish up the attack on other political parties". The leader of Belarusian Labor Party stated that the initiative of the authorities was directly linked to the parliamentary election: "The liquidation of political parties begins, which means the establishment of the complete dictatorship. I think they chose our party because it is smaller than the party of communists or United Civil Party. May be they think we are the opposition's weakness. It may be also the initiative of the official Federation of trade unions, the people and structures who fight against independent workers' and trade union movement. Many different people and state organs were interested in liquidation of our party." At the same time, the Ministry of Justice paid too much interest to the activities of BSDH, BPF and other parties in opposition. Stanislau Shushkievich and Vintsuk Viachorka said the authorities might try to liquidate other political parties just before the election. Belarusian Labor Party was established in 1993 and has about 2,5 thousand members. It is the first attempt of the authorities to liquidate a registered party. However, in 1999 such parties as Peasant Party, National Democratic Party, Party of Common Sense, Party of National Unity and Consent, Christian-democratic Union, etc. were liquidated. All of them had too few members to go through the re-registration.

On ***26 June*** the activists of United Civil Party Vital Filipovich, Vadzim Iodziel and Iauhien Luksha were detained in Hrodna for conducting the poll concerning the third presidential term to Aliaksandr Lukashenka. The police took them to Hrodna Kastrychnitski Borough Board of Internal Affairs and drew the detention reports. The detainee received the summons to come to the BBIA on 28 June. UCP activists organized "alternative referendum" in the cities of Hrodna, Vaukavysk and Vitsebsk. They asked people: "Do you agree that one person should be able to occupy presidential position for more than 2 terms in succession?". 3 613 persons of the 3 922 (more than 92%) said they were against it. Of course, the law machinery showed a negative reaction to the event.

On ***27 June*** the 16-year-old Zubr activist Dzmitry Kuchynski was detained near Gorky Park in Minsk while handing out printed production. The police took him to a police

station and drew a report for violation part 3 of Article 172 of the Code of Administrative Offences. The police didn't explain to him the right, guaranteed by Article #247 of the Code of Administrative Offences and didn't inform his parents about the detention. They also tried to search the detainee's personal belongings and confiscate the found fly-sheets without drawing the appropriate reports. When Dzmitry pointed at it, the police captain Zhebit hit him seVieral times across the head and in the legs. In his application to Minsk Partyzanski Borough Procurator's Office Dzmitry Kuchynski wrote: "Aliaksandr Shelieh witnessed my beating". He demanded to conduct a check-up concerning the fact of the beating and punish the police captain.

On ***28 June*** four political parties in Vitsiebsk and one public organi-zation were officially ordered to move out of the offices they rented:

- Vitsiebsk city organization of United Civil Party;
- Liberal Democratic Party;
- Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada;
- Belarusian Social Democratic Party Narodnaia Hramada;
- NGO Self-government and Society.

The activists stated that the deprival of offices was connected to the preparation to the parliamentary election. The evicted organizations rented house 10/7 in Hertsen Street owned by building trust #9 for four years. On 27 June the chairs of the city organizations of UCP, LDPB, BSDH and BSDP (NH) received letters, signed by Valiantsin Kozichkin, chair of the trust. He informed them about the breech of the rent agreement and the order to leave the building within 10-days' term. The evicted organizations didn't manage to find about the future plans of the trust concerning the house. The party leaders prepared a political statement to the regional and the city authorities concerning the deprival of offices, while Vitsiebsk TV showed ads that the building trust was ready to provide the offices to new owners.

On ***28 June*** Malaryta District Court warned Uladzimir Maliei, lawyer of Human Rights Center Viasna, member of Belarusian Peoples Front and deputy of the local deputy soviet. The warning was issued for the meeting with the electorate in the village of Struha concerning the building of the burial of nuclear wastes near the village. The local police treated the meeting as unauthorized assembly for which the deputy was to be punished. Disregarding to the law norms, the case was considered in Maliei's absence, who informed the court he wasn't able to attend the trial. By the way, representatives of Malaryta District Executive Committee attended the meeting and said nothing about law violations. That's why Uladzimir Maliei is of the opinion that the warning was issued for

other reasons. «This administrative case was brought 1,5 months after the meeting", — said Maliei. – "I think that the real motive for it was that BPF Party sued Mr. Strok, chair of the information board of Malaryta DEC, who said that during World War II BPF Party collaborated with Nazi.".

On ***28 June*** the Zubr activists Paviel Iukhnievich, Raman Kazakie-vich, Liubou Kuchynskaia and Katsiaryna Smirnova were detained for distribution of Zubr newspaper in Minsk. Iukhnievich was detained in Uskhod tube station, the rest – near Instytut Kultury tube station. The police drew on them reports under Article #172 of the Code of Administrative Offences (violation of the law on mass media).

On ***28 June*** the deputies of the Respublika group Valiery Fralou, Uladzimir Parfianovich and Siarhiei Skrabiets applied to Minsk City Executive Committee with the request to permit the action, devoted to the ten-year rule of Aliaksandr Lukashenka, on 21 June. Among the applicants there were the leader of the public initiative We Remember Iryna Krasouskaia, the Zubr activist Mikita Sasim and the co-chair of the Council of Belarusian intellectuals Uladzimir Kolas. The applicants intended to hold the action at 6 p.m. on 21 June, in Iakub Kolas Square. According to Siarhiei Skrabiets, the application was filed in advance so that the authorities could think how they could help in holding of the demonstration, meeting and the concert.

On ***29 June***, during their visit to Babruisk, the deputies of Respublika group Valiery Fralou and Siarhiei Skrabiets had to meet with the city's electors and public activists in Victory Square, because the authorities didn't give any room for the meeting. According to the leader of Babruisk organization of United Civil Party Uladzimir Kurtukou

On ***29 June*** Mikhail Marynich sent open letter to Lieanid Ieryn, chair of KGB, and Viktar Sheiman, Procurator General. Mikhail Marynich accused them in supporting t

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On ***1 July*** it became known that Belarusian Jewish organizations work together to create an anti-fascist committee for struggle against the threat of expanding anti-Semitism. Iakau Basin, vice-president of the Union of Belarusian Jewish Associations and Communities, an-nounced creation of the committee. Jewish organizations of Belarus repeatedly complained about desecration of Jewish cemeteries and open sale of anti-Semitic literature. The only university in the country offering courses on Jewish culture has recently been closed by the authorities. Iakau Basin claims the Belarusian Procurator's office and KGB are not efficient in working against neo-fascists and skin-heads. These move¬ments are gaining strength facing absolutely no obstacles in their ac¬tivities. "The history of the 20th century demonstrates that a state tolerant of neo-Nazi trends will sooner or later lead to irreversible consequences, destructive social phenomena, and, eventually, to numerous human victims", — says the statement of the Union of Jewish Organizations. At the same time Minsk publishing office of the limited company "Pravo¬slavnaya Initsiativa" ("Orthodox Initiative"), which is well-known by its book "War on Villainy Terms" (that was found insulting by Belarusian Jews and was a subject of many trials), issued two similar books. One can buy the new books in the bookstore "Pravoslavnaya Initsiativa" in the center of Minsk. The first of them is "How They Make One Anti-Se¬mite" by Andrey Kuraiev. It is decorated with straightly anti-Semitic cartoons, such as a picture of fascism and Zionism as two branches of the same tree. The second book is entitled "There are no bad peoples". It states, for instance, that the system of the first years of the Soviet rule was built after Jewish community.

On ***1 July*** During the last day of its session the House of Represen¬tatives passed the Law "On the state security bodies of the Republic of Belarus" in its first reading. This is not the first version of the Law on KGB: the first one was adopted in 1993 by the Supreme Soviet of the 12th convocation. Then the representatives of the BPF party in opposition managed to block a number of provisions, which would provide KGB with some extraordinary functions. Only 3 MPs voted against the present draft law. The law is still not in effect; it is adopted only in the first reading. Most probably, its second reading will be considered by the next parliament. According to the new law, KGB members have the right to break doors open without the prosecutor's sanction. They can get the prosecutor's sanction later, during 24 hours after breaking in. This concerns not only the property of Belarusian citizens and organizations. Under Art 14 of the law, KGB agents have the right to penetrate into offices belonging to foreign citizens and organizations, which gather intelligence and might impair the security interests of Belarus. Naturally, KGB will be the body setting the criteria of such "impairment". The new draft law allows

KGB agents to infiltrate into organizations and companies, including private ones, under cover of usual employment. At the same time, if someone publicly exposes an agent, he will face criminal liability under Art 18 of the Law.

On ***1 July*** at 11.30 Valiery Fralou and his driver were beaten in the porch of the house in Kazarmenny bystreet where Fralou's official flat is situated. When Fralou and his driver entered the porch, five unknown persons in black masks burst on them. They hit them in the face, ribs and kidneys. During the fight a postbox was dropped on the floor from the wall it hanged on. The driver got a tooth plucked out. The unknown persons took away Fralou's bag with documents and books, wallet and passport. Who could organize the assault and battery? The deputy answers: "At the police I was asked whether there were any threats to me. I answered that there were. A year ago Aliaksandr Lukashenka said that there won't be any place for me in Belarus and I would be chopped like a cabbage. I think that it's the beginning of the fulfillment. However, we are not surprised as we are being watched and bugged all the time". According to Fralou and the head of the deputy group "Res-publika" Siarhiei Skrabiets with whom the general flew to Moscow on 1 July, in Moscow they were watched by four persons in plain clothes with a video camera. Two days before the beating Valiery Fralou was warned about it and advised to hire guards. However, he had too little time for it. Minsk Leninski Borough Prosecutor's Office brought a case to investigate the assault on the deputy of the Chamber of Representatives Valiery Fralou and his driver by terms of part 2 of Article 205 – robbery.

On ***1 July*** the board of appeal of the National Center of Intellectual Property confirmed its earlier 2003 decision saying that the Narodnaia Volia trademark belongs to the businessman Siarhiei Atroshchanka. Thus, now Siarhiei Atroshchanka can demand from the "Narodnaia Volia" to change its title. However, the newspaper editor-in-chief Iosif Siaredzich claims he will not allow any "rogue" to use the title. The newspaper representatives plan to appeal against the decision to higher instances. The hearing began on June 30. "Narodnaia Volia" representatives – patent agent Eduard Svirski and commercial manager Jauhieniia Tsierakhava – claim registration of the trade mark was a mistake. "This is a brand name, protected by Art 50 of the Civic Code, — stresses Eduard Svirski, — thus Siaredzich has the exclusive right to this brand name. The Civic Code is higher in the law hierarchy than the Law on trade marks". Iosif Siaredzich registered the "Narodnaia Volia" as a periodical almost 9 years ago. Nobody ever challenged his authorship of the brand name. There is no doubt Atroshchanka knew about the brand name when registering his trade mark: the businessman has sued the newspaper a number of times. According to the Law "On trademarks", which came into force on

January 1, 2004, Atroshchanka wouldn't be able to register the trademark as his own: the Law prohibits registering a trade mark coinciding with a newspaper title without the agreement of the newspaper founder. The previous law did not contain this provision. Representatives of the "Narodnaia Volia" are concerned about the fact how promptly Atroshchanka managed to use the old law: it took him 3 days to register the trade mark, although usually it takes up to 12 months to get the certificate from the expert committee. "The image of the newspaper is seriously damaged, because the owner of the trademark can appeal to relevant bodies to stop the newspaper with the title "Narodnaia Volia", — says Mikhail Pastukhou, head of the Center of Le¬gal Defense of Mass Media at the Belarusian Association of Journa¬lists. He believes the decision of the board of appeal is politically mo¬tivated. "Now, similarly to this case, one can register a CNN or Forbes trademark in Belarus, and not let these mass media to the country's market, — warns patent agent Eduard Svirski, — if you have a trademark certificate, you can force out anyone from the country".

On ***1 July*** Minsk police detained Anatol Shumchanka, head of the Entrepreneurs' Association "Perspektyva". The incident took place on Rakauski Kirmash market. Head of "Perspektyva" came to the market to help the market vendor Lilia Shymanovich protect her rights. On 17 June the market administration began to persecute Lilia, who participated in the entrepreneurs' strike in support of the MPs' on hunger strike. Lilia was told the shop rental contract had been cancelled. Shum¬chanka's initiative to return the shop to the association activist was stopped violently. It turned out Shumchanka had been attacked by the market security guards. "Rakauski Kirmash" director Aliaksandr Sinkou believes, Shumchanka is guilty of the incident: "Shumchanka distorted the facts. He accused the administration of the enterprise I am heading of many facts. He and his people collected signatures among some shop assistants, who did not have the status of an entrepreneur. As it turned out, the signatures were collected unof¬ficially". The market security guards kept Shumchanka in the basement for about an hour. The market administration ignored the demands of market vendors to release their leader. Only after a police officer arrived to the place of the incident Shumchanka was let go. Mr. Shumchanka commented on the event: "If guards of ordinary market twist arms to a man on political mo-tives, it characterizes our country. I think this inci¬dent is an extraordinary one".

On ***2 July*** Viktar Shulha, Miyory resident, was detained for distri-buting fly-sheets with portraits of the disappeared Belarusian politicians. In the police station they searched him, without showing him a personal search warrant, and demands he should produce registration documents of the district party branch. The police took a copy of

lists of all members of the UCP in Miory District, confiscating the rest of the fly-sheets featuring portraits of Iury Zakharanka, Viktar Hanchar, Anatol Krasouski and Dzmitry Zavadski. Now, Mr. Shulha believes the party names will be handed by the police over to the district executive committee, which may well result in the UCP members having problems at work largely owning to the currently used contract-based employment system. As regards Mr. Shulha, the police had already passed the detention report to the district administrative commission for consideration. What is more, the police officers warned they would insist he should be fined.

On ***2 July*** the head of Mahiliou organization of the United Civil Party (UCP) Uladzimir Shantsau and the secretary of Mahiliou regional committee of the Party of Communists of Belarus Anatol Zauialau were detained in the town of Bykhau (Mahiliou region). Both of them came to Bykhau for meeting with the Bykhau representatives of the People's Coalition "5+". They were detained by the police before the meeting, while handing out fly-sheets outdoors. A report for distribution of printed production without issue data was composed on Anatol Zauialau, who had 1500 fly-sheets with him.

On ***2 July*** the police detained the Zubr activists Daryia Maldavanava and Katsiaryna S. for distributing the Zubr newspaper in the center of Minsk and Aliena Shpironak and Iulia Auhustsinovich, were detained in the city of Baranavichy.

On ***3 July*** in Minsk the police detained Liubou Kuchynskaya for handing out newspapers. They kept her for more than two hours in Tsentralny DBIA.

On ***3 July*** Five-Plus activists staged a public voting on the issues of the third presidential term in Navapolatsk. During the voting two activists were detained by the police. The police arrested Alies Karnienka, an activist of the Five-Plus coalition who had come to Navapolatsk the day before, and the Navapolatsk resident Aliaksei Lukashevich. The police drew up reports registering the violations allegedly committed by the activists by terms of Article 167 of the Code of Administrative Offences.

On ***5 July*** the Ministry of Justice issued warnings to three opposition parties – the BPF Party, UCP and BSDG. Belarusian People's Front received a warning for the urges to attend the "Chain of Concerned Readers" action in support of the "Narodnaia Volia" newspaper. The text of the warning signed by the first deputy Minister of Justice of Belarus A.S.Pietrash is translated with preservation of the original's inaccuracies: "On the grounds of information that was presented to the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Belarus it was found that the People's Coalition "5+", a member of which is Belarusian Social-democratic Hramada Party, in pages of two numbers of the "Narodnaia Volia" newspaper illegally urged citizens of Belarus to participation in the unauthorized action

"Chain of Concerned Readers" at 6 p.m. on 10 June 2004. The picket was con¬ducted and the party took part in it. Minsk City Executive Committee didn't receive any application for authorization of this action and didn't make any decision about it. By these actions Article 8 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus "About mass measures in the Republic of Belarus" was grossly violated, as organizer or organizers of a mass action have no right to publish information about its date and place in mass media, produce and distribute fly-sheets about it before they receive autho¬rization. In these circumstances and being guided by Articles 32, 33 and 34 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus "About political parties" a warning is issued to the Soym of the BPF Party".

On ***5 July*** the Ministry of Justice demanded that the BPF Party should submit documents for registering their membership in the coalition. The BPF Party received a letter from the Ministry of Justice signed by the first deputy of the Minister A.S.Pietrash, which said: "Being guided by information of mass media and internet, on the territory of the Republic of Belarus there has been established and acts People's coalition "5+" and the BPF Party is its member. According to the dictionary of Russian language by S.I. Ozhegov and N.Yu. Shvedova coalition is the unity (of states, parties) for reaching a common aim. Other dictio¬naries give analogous explanations. The legislation of the Republic of Belarus allows establishment of unions (associations) of parties, public associations and other juridical persons. The activity of unregistered unions (associations) is prohibited. In these circumstances the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Belarus proposes to the Soym of the party to take the appropriate decision and judicially institutionalize the activity of the People's Coalition "5+" by presenting documents for its registration till 15 August 2004. At the same time, we recommend to stop participation in the activity of the unregistered formation till the question of its registration according to the established order is solved. Otherwise, the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Belarus will consider participation of the party in the activity of the above mentioned association as a gross violation of the legislation on political parties". United Civil Party received a similar letter.

On ***5 July*** the hungering deputies were deprived of salary bonu-ses. The head of the Chamber of Representatives of Belarusian Parliament Vadzim Papou ordered not to give any salary bonus (35% of a deputy's wage, about 200 000 rubles) to Valiery Fralou, Siarhiei Skrabiets and Uladzimir Parfianovich for "inappropriate execution of their official duties which manifested in absence at sittings of regular commissions of the Chamber of Representatives without good excuse". This order was allegedly signed by Papou when he received office memos from the heads of three regular commissions, Lektarau, Kisialiou and Bikinin. According to Skrabiets, this decision was politically motivated,

because some of the deputies did not attend any meetings, and they did not know how some of the deputies looked like. Nonetheless, they were not deprived of their bonuses.

On ***5 July*** the office based in Eslinge, Germany, and headed by Liudmila Karpienka, the widow of the renowned Belarusian politician Hienadz Karpienka, sent 70 written warnings regarding criminal responsibility for violation election legislation. The letters were sent to various persons – from the Chair of the Central Election Committee to officials working in executive committees at different levels, all of whom are responsible for organizing and conducting election campaigns. Warning #1 went to the Chair of the Central Election Committee.

On ***6 July*** the BPF Party expressed its disagreement with the warning that was issued by the Ministry of Justice. The party has already prepared a complaint against it to the Supreme Court. The BPF disagrees with the warning on the following grounds: 1. The BPF Party neither organized nor took part in the unauthorized picket on 10 June 2004. The appropriate bodies didn't take any decision to support the event that took place on 10 June 2004 in Minsk. 2. The warning doesn't mention the actions that brought about the warning. Being guided by part 3 of Article 34 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On political parties", the BPF asks to set the warning aside and also present the information on the basis of which the warning was issued, so that the party has the possibility to consider it while preparing for the trial.

On ***7 July*** the Human Rights Center Viasna applied to Mr. Sidiki Kaba, President of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) with the request for juridical consultation and assistance concerning the possibility of bringing criminal cases against the officials of the Republic of Belarus who were suspected in kidnaps and possible lynching of political opponents of Lukashenka's regime.

On ***7 July*** the UN Committee on Human Rights, in conformity with the International Treaty on Civil and Political Rights registered under No. 1296/2004 the complaint of members of the public association Human Rights Center Viasna against liquidation of the association issued by the Supreme Court of Belarus. Within the limits of the procedure the Committee filed inquiry to the official authorities of the Republic of Belarus, demanding to present information concerning this case. The authorities are to answer to the Committee within 6-months' term. It's worth mentioning that on 28 October 2003 the public association "Human Rights Center Viasna was liquidated on suit of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Belarus.

On ***7 July*** at 8 a.m. three unidentified people attacked Siarhiei Antonchyk, a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the 12th Convocation and the activist of the working

movement. Mr. Antonchyk was attacked on the parking lot where he usually leaves his car for the night. Captain Aliaksandr Drozd of Minsk City Police Department, issued Siarhiei Anton-chyk a receipt 1318 proving that the police have registered this accident. Siarhiei Antonchyk attributes the attack to what he has been doing recently toward organizing elections – parliamentary and presidential.

On ***7 July*** activists of Human Rights Center Viasna presented the results of the Program on monitoring of execution of the right to fair trial at administrative trials. During the presentation the program coordinator Iury Chavusau said that the monitoring was conducted in 12 courts of Minsk, Brest, Vitsebsk, Navapolatsk and Polatsk. 533 administrative cases were monitored. A considerable part of the trials were conducted with gross law violations. The coordinator of the monitoring program in Minsk Uladzimir Labkovich said that judges had begun to visit offenders and try them in their premises. According to him, it deprives defendants of the rights to apply for advocate and summon witnesses. Often administrative cases are considered in absence of the tried persons, and courts find defendants guilty of their absence. "At present administrative responsibility is a means of intimidating political opponents of the authorities and satisfy economic interests of the state by filling the budget by administrative fines", — said Chavusau. The brochure that was issued on the results of the monitoring contains recommenda¬tions on improvement of the existing court practice. The editors hope that the results of the monitoring will help courts to consider administrative cases more competently and will favor observance of human rights during administrative trials. Also, the monitoring results will be presented to the deputies of the Chamber of Representatives of the 3rd Convocation. The human rights hope believe that their proposals would be supported as the Parliament considers the new Administrative Code. In view of the above, Alies Mikhalievich, Deputy Chair of the BPF Party and a candidate for the Chamber of Representatives running from the Popular Coalition Five+, who attended the presentation, said that he and the «deputies who will be elected from the coalition will do all they can to fulfil the human rights activists' recommendations concerning the review of administrative cases in this country».

On ***9 July*** Homiel citizen Iryna Rudziak complained to Human Rights Center Viasna that he couldn't get the personal auDence of the head of Homiel Regional Executive Committee (REC) for a long time. The committee officials sent to her come-offs, but didn't provide any auDence. As it was found from the correspondence of I. Rudziak with the officials, the problem is quite serious: Homiel REC adopted an instruction that limited legal rights of citizens. Ina Rudziak received support in composing of inquiry to the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Belarus. The lawyer of Human Rights Center

Viasna Valiantsin Stefanovich comments on the situation: “Reception of citizens at Homiel Regional Executive Committee is regulated by Instruction No. 267 adopted on 17 April 2003. Paragraph 9 of the instruction contains provisions requiring citizens to register for personal reception only on written application that is to contain only legal issues that haven’t been solved by duty officials. It means that citizens can’t simply get auDence of the committee head – they are to write an application and to prove there that their claims are legal. Such a system is very convenient for getting rid of people instead of dealing with their problems. Besides, there’s a decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Belarus of 15 April 2004 by which similar paragraph in the Ruling on the order of reception at Minsk City Executive Committee was found incompatible with the Law of the Republic of Belarus “On Applications of Citizens. By this decision the action of this paragraph was stopped. On 7 May Minsk CEC set it aside and introduced appropriate changes to its Ruling. Now Minsk citizens don’t have to prove the legality of their demands to meet with the CEC head. However, citizens of Homiel region still have to do it, despite the fact that, according to part 2 of Article 9 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus “On Constitutional Court of the Republic of Belarus” the norms that are similar to those that were found unconstitutional, are to lose their force as well. It means that Homiel REC must introduce amendments to its instruction by appropriate decision. I believe that instructions that limit legal interests of citizens can be used in other executive committees as well.”

On ***9 July*** Ministry of Justice of Belarus sent an official inquiry to the United Trade Union of Radioelectronics Industry and Agricultural Car Industry requiring they confirm the legal competence of the professional association leaving the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus. The Ministry inquiry also requests official confirmation of the number of the United Trade Union members though the Union was registered only two months ago. Hienadz Fiadynich, Co-chair of the Trade Union believes that this demand aims at liquidating the trade union.

On ***9 July*** the senior editor of the Den newspaper Mikola Markievich filed a complaint with Hrodna Region Court, which requested that the ruling by Leninski Borough Court of Hrodna that upheld the legality of the administrative committee be annulled. The committee had punished Mr. Markievich for allegedly distributing printed periodicals without imprint, and also legalized the confiscation of the newspaper print-run by the police. 4800 copies of the newspaper were confiscated in April on the Minsk-Hrodna highway by the traffic police at Iuie. The administrative committee confirmed the report the police officers had drawn up, though it was based on the wrong article of the Administrative Code. Mr. Mar¬kievich was punished for distributing printed materials,

while the news¬paper is a medium. Furthermore, as of detention, this issue had not been distributed yet. Mikola Markievich also filed complaints with the rulings by the Economic Court of Hrodna Region, which authorize eviction of the Public Association Batskaushchyna and of the City Branch of Belarusian Language Society. They had been accused of violating the lease contract, because the editorial office of the Den had allegedly been based on their premises. Mikola Markievich is the head of both organizations. The complaints were sent to the appeal division of the Economic Court of Hrodna Region.

On ***12 July*** the activist of the unregistered youth movement Zubr Nasta Vasilienka was detained by the police while handing-out news-papers in Minsk subway. The policemen took her to a police point and composed a report for resistance to legal demands of the police (Article No. 166 of the Code of Administrative Offences).

On ***12 July*** the Supreme Court of the Republic of Belarus started the consideration of the suit of the Ministry of Justice for liquidation of Belarusian Labor Party. The suit said that Belarusian Labor Party untimely changed its legal address, inappropriately conducted the registration of its regional structures and committed other “gross violations of legislation”. However, on 12 July the Supreme Court did not get to discuss the suit. At the trial the head of Belarusian Labor Party Aliaksandr Bukhvostau entered two petitions. The first of them – about impeachment to the judge Hanna Sakalouskaia (in 1999 she supported the decision of the Ministry of Justice to deny registration to the Association of industrial trade unions, many members of which are also members of Belarusian Labor Party) and the second – to postpone the trial so that the party had some time to get ready for the trial. The first petition was rejected. As regards the second one, the judge agreed to postpone the trial to 30 July. Aliaksandr Bukhvostau calls this case political and initiated on the eve of the election by the authorities of the Federation of trade unions and Presidential Administration. The US Embassy in Belarus expressed its concerns about the upcoming liquidation.

On ***12 July*** the term of custody for the leader of the nation-wide stri-ke committee of businessmen Valiery Lievanieuski, who had been in custody since 18 May, was prolonged till 15 August after the entrepreneur had been charged with Article 368 part.2 of the Criminal Code – «public insult of the President of the Republic of Belarus». The term of custody was prolonged due to «investigation needs».

On ***12 July*** Minsk Piershamaiski Borough Court refused to initiate civil case on suit of the BPF Party to Belarusian State TV and Radio Company and the journalist Iury Prakopau for slandering the BPF on TV on 25 April 2004 In his speech Prakopau stated that if the

BPF comes to power all support programs to victims of Chernobyl tragedy would me stopped. In its refusal the court referred to the ruling of the Plenum of the Supreme Soviet according to which only economy subjects can apply for defense of their business reputation in the case it is spoilt by other economy subjects or citizens. So, the court is of the opinion that the BPF, being non-commercial juridical body (as well as any other party) doesn't have business reputation, which is certainly an illegal and discriminatory action in breach of the Civil Code which provides for equal legal status of all legal persons. The BPF is going to complain against it to the College of civil cases at Minsk City Court.

On ***12 July*** Minsk Tsentralny Borough Court considered the complaint of Mikhail Marynich against illegal detention at the investigative ward of KGB. Judge Lieanid Iasiukievich did not satisfy the complaint despite the arguments of lawyers who are convinced that Mikhail Marynich has been kept in the investigative ward of KGB illegally.

On ***12 July*** Hrodna Regional Civil Court satisfied the suit of the public association "Will for Development" against the decision of Slonim Town Tax Inspection to exact from the organization 15 million rubles tax from the means, received within the limits of the TACIS technical aid program. Judge Alieh Kadach set aside the decision of the tax inspection and obliged it to compensate the court expenses. To his decision he attached the verdict on analogous case of the public association "Belarusian Helsinki Committee". Nevertheless, Slonim tax inspection intends to file a complaint against the decision of Hrodna Regional Economic Court. The complaint against the verdict on BHC case has been already filed. Because the decision taken by the Tax Inspection was annulled, the criminal case initiated against the leader of the Will for Development association Mikhas Varaniets must be dropped owning to the absence of corpus delicti.

On ***12 July*** four teenagers were detained in Brest: Paviel Dziemi-dziuk, Mikhail Iliin, Paviel Khivuk and Alies Vashchulka. Outside the Belarus movie theatre they were handing out the Zubr and the "Osvobozhdeniye" newspapers together with the book "Belarus: Undisclosed Crimes of Modern History". The action lasted only for quarter of an hour. Then somebody called for the police. While waiting for the patrol car, the teenagers phoned to Viasna and said they were detained. The police composed a report of violation where it was stated that the detainees distributed political literature. The detainees were taken to Brest Leninski Board of Internal Affairs, where they also confiscated 150 Zubr newspapers and 10 books. Then the teenagers were released.

On ***13 July*** the head of the public security department of Navahradak Town Board of Internal Affairs (TBIA) A. Kiarletski phoned to the activist of Belarusian Labor Party Larysa Bukhalienka and proposed her to come to the TBIA for a talk about her political activity.

Bukhalienka said she would come to the TBIA only if she received printed call-up where it was specified in which capacity she was summoned. On 14 July she received the call-up to come to the TBIA as a witness. When she came there and asked the witness of what she could be, A. Kiarlietski showed her fly-sheets with information about her and the program of the People's Coalition "5+" – "Five steps to better life". The policeman asked L. Bu¬khalienka about her political activity, where the fly-sheets were printed and how they were delivered to Navahradak. He asked whether any guests came to her and whether he could meet anyone if he came to her flat at night. Then he said that 6 policemen would come to her at night to conduct a search. L. Bukhalienka refused to answer the policeman's questions and sign anything. Then she had a talk with the head of Navahradak TBIA Zmitrevich, who said he wanted to see only law-abiding citizens in the Parliament, not such as Larysa Bukhalienka. As a result, they read a warning to Larysa Bukhalienka that prohibited her "to distribute printed production before the agitation stage". Larysa Bukhalienka composed a complaint to Navahradak Town Procurator's Office against the illegal actions of the police and had an auDence of Navahradak procurator.

On ***13 July*** Liudmila Hraznova received the following letter from Minsk Partyzanski Borough Passport Office: "Being guided by Article 5 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus of 2 June 1992 "On the order of departure from the Republic of Belarus and the entrance in Belarus by citizens of the Republic of Belarus" your right to leave Belarus is temporary limited". The circumstances that don't let Liudmila Hraznova go abroad are connected to her political activity: in April 2004 she was among the organizers of "Chernobyl Way" rally and was fined 225 basic units (more than $2 000) for alleged violation of part 2 of Article 167.1 of the Code of Administrative Offences (violation of the order and organization of mass actions) by Minsk Savietski Borough Court. Though Liudmila Hraznova complained against this verdict, the court didn't satisfy her complaint.

On ***13 July*** judge of Homiel Tsentralny Borough Court Iaraslau Pa¬remski fined the head of Homiel organization of Free Trade Union of Entrepreneurs Tatsiana Marchanka and the entrepreneur Uladzimir Niapomniashchykh 1 900 000 rubles for holding of unauthorized mee-ting during the strike in support of the deputies who were on hunger-strike. They were accused of staging an unauthorized meeting on 17 June, rather than organizing a strike.

On ***14 July*** Ministry of Justice Viktar Halavanau said that if the coalition Five+ did not get registered as a public association, measures would be taken to punish those acting in breach of the legislation. Mr. Halavanau also added he was sure there were no obstacles

to registration and said that the registration problem had to be solved by mid-August. If the parties do not do that, their actions, according to the Minister of Justice, will be evaluated as violation of the effective legislation.

On ***14 July*** the deputy of Masty Borough Deputy Soviet, member of the Party of Communists of Belarus Aliaksandr Budaukin was visited by the police inspector, who said he was ordered to compose on Budaukin a report for violation of part 3 of Article 172 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Belarus (distribution of printed production without issue data). According to the composed report, A. Budaukin is charged with distribution of printed materials with the program of the People’s Coalition “5+” without issue data. Besides, Aliaksandr Budaukin has received a call-up from Masty Town Procurator’s Office where he is said to be summoned by the district procurator’s office. Aliaksandr Budaukin believes that the pressurization by the law machinery is connected with his intentions to run for deputy position at the Chamber of Representatives.

On ***14 July*** the police detained the head of the public association “Vetraz” Alies Masiuk and his friend in the town of Zhyrovichy (situated in Slonim district) for handing out “Five+” fly-sheets to passers-by”. The KGB agent who questioned the guys refused to disclose his identity.

On ***14 July*** the Hindu community of Krishna followers sent a letter to Lieanid Ieryn, KGB Chair, in which the believers ask for the campaign launched against them by the state-owned press and the Ministry of Education to be stopped. The society members argue that epithets degrading the Hindu religious minorities that appeared recently are not accidental. Also, the Krishna followers are worried about the content of articles printed in the state-owned press and secondary school textbooks, where they are referred to as a dangerous totalitarian sect.

On ***16 July*** the head of Zhodzina organization of Belarusian People’s Front Aliaksiei Lapitski has been summoned to the police by a telephone call. The police demanded from him to explain the appearance of the fly-sheets of the People’s Coalition “5+” in Zhodzina. They were interested to find where did the fly-sheets come from and whether he had any relation to them.

On ***19 July*** the international coordinator for the Civil Initiative Charter-97 Andrei Sannikau was summonsed to the procurator’s office of Belarus. The reason was the article «Terrorist Relationships of Belarus» printed in the June issue of the Washington Post. Senior assistant to the Procurator Siarhiei Novikau proposed that Andrei Sannikau explain the conclusions made in the newspaper article. The 12 June article Terrorist

Relationships of Belarus prepared by Andrei Sannikau and Mark Lenzi implicated Aliaksandr Lukashenka in supporting contacts with the terrorist states. Andrei Sannikau explained that he used materials earlier printed in various Belarusian and foreign periodicals.

On ***19 July*** Navapolatsk-based members of the Free Trade Union staged a picket against employees being forced to enter into employment contracts, and also against trade union activists losing their jobs. The picket was permitted by the authorities and took place near the City Palace of Culture: as usual, the participants held Free Trade Union flags, posters, and handed out to the Minsk residents the July issue of the trade union bulletin Region and other democratic press.

On ***19 July*** Minsk City Court set aside the protest filed by the Chair of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee Tatsiana Protska against the earlier ruling by Piershamaiski Borough Court. The ruling in question concerned the file by Tatsiana Protska against the State TV and Radio Company and against the journalist Iury Prakopau. In November 2003 Outlook on the World, the program hosted by Mr. Prakopau, argued that around 900 thousand dollars the Belarusian Helsinki Committee had received as foreign donations had disappeared. The TV company did not back up the claims with evidence, but the court did not admit that Tatsiana Protska's dignity had been undermined. Minsk City Court passed a similar ruling.

On ***20 July*** it became known that in Kurapaty a shield featuring a notice that a memorial to the victims of the political repressions would be put up there had disappeared. The police of Minsk District initiated criminal proceedings to investigate into the shield's disappearance. The notice on that shield said that in 1989 the Government ruled to put up a memorial to commemorate the victims of the repressions in the 1930s-40s. Even the police doubt the criminals had stolen the shield because of its material value – it does not cost much.

On ***20 July*** the well-known opposition activist Palina Panasiuk applied to Brest regional branch of Human Rights Center Viasna saying that the authorities refused to put into her passport the seal that permits going abroad. The reason was that Panasiuk didn't pay 1,5 million rubles fine imposed on her for participation in the "Chain of Concerned People" in 2002. However, this punishment was set aside by Brest Regional Court duet to the absence of corpus delicti.

On ***21 July*** Hrodna Leninski Borough Prosecutor's Office initiated a criminal case upon article 342 of the Criminal Code against Valiery Lievanieuski, his son Uladzimir

Lievanieuski and Aliaksandr and Natallia Vasilieus. All of them are charged with organization of the unauthorized meeting on 1 May and gross violations of public order. It is the second criminal case brought against them. The first was for public insult to president. Upon article 342 one can be punished with up to three years in jail. In the statement of the major investigator of the prosecutor's office Alfred Tankievich it is said that Mrs. Lievanieuski and Vasilieu produced and distributed many fly-sheets with urges to come to the unauthorized meeting that was held on 1 May with active participation of Natallia Vasilieva and Uladzimir Lievanieuski. Vasilieu believes that the new criminal case was initiated against Lievanieuski and him because the previous one, for insult to president, proved to be fruitless. The accused still haven't been told which words exactly are considered to be insulting for president Lukashenka. We should also remind, that Hrodna was the only city to hold a meeting with political demands on 1 May – people insisted on Lukashenka's retirement from the position he occupied. On 21 July Hrodna Leninski Borough Court turned down the petition of Lievanieuski's advocate to change the restraint to the accused, which meant that Lievanieuski would be kept in the investigative ward of Hrodna at least till 15 August. The court did not change the conditions of detention.

On ***21 July*** the BPF Party Soym appealed the refusal to launch a business reputation case against the National State TV and Radio Company of the Republic of Belarus, and the journalist Iury Prakopau. On 8 July 2004 Judge Petukh of Piershamaiski Borough Court of Minsk heard the business reputation case by the Soym of the BPF Party against the National State TV and Radio Company of the Republic of Belarus and Iury Prakopau and ruled that a civil case could not be launched because it was beyond the court competence. The complaint sent to the Court Collegium for Civil Cases of Minsk City Court demands that the ruling taken by Piershamaiski Court of Minsk dated 8 July 2004 be cancelled, and the case be transferred to a first level court for consideration.

On ***21 July*** it was 10 years since Aliaksandr Lukashenka came to power. According to the Constitution of 1994, which was in force during his first election, he could rule the country for two 5-year terms. However, after the outrageous referendum of 1996 A. Lukashenka changed the Constitution and thus prolonged his "legitimate" term for two years. This referendum wasn't recognized anywhere in the world except for Russia, the authorities of which helped Lukashenka to preserve his power. That's why on 21 July 2004 the democratic forces of Belarus decided to remind Lukashenka that the time of his rule was over. Minsk city authorities allowed a meeting in Banhalor Square. However, at about 6 p.m. people started gathering in Iakub Kolas Square, in order to make a procession to Banhalor Square (where the main measures and the concert of Belarusian

rock-groups were to have taken place), sum up Lukashenka's 10-year rule, express disagreement with his politics and the intention to change the Constitution and remain president for another five years. The action was called "Your Answer to System". After 8 p.m. special police forces started forcing out the action participants from Iakub Kolas Square and blocked the entrance to it. They also tried to arrest Siarhiei Skrabiets, deputy of the Chamber of Representatives who belonged to the "Respublika" group, but then were ordered from the above to di¬scharge him. At 6.15 p.m. a ring of policemen blocked about 50 young¬sters. After a short clash the latter ones were arrested and forced into a police bus. During the detention the police threw the action participants on the ground and kicked them with feet. They were supported by policemen in plain clothes. Journalists who had gathered for the occasion witnessed all of this with their own eyes. When the arrests were over, the bus drove the detainees to Minsk Savietski Borough Board of Internal Affairs. Despite the mass arrests a group of youngsters managed to unroll seVieral banners with the inscriptions "Belarus is the last dictatorial matrix of Europe", "It's time to liberate the mind", etc. The police closed in on them and arrested seVieral persons. At 6.40 two groups of youngsters, seVieral hundred people in each moved to Banhalor Square. The columns went without any banners, but chanted slogans all the time. Many youngsters wore T-shirts: white, with portrait of Mikhail Marynich and inscription "Belarus Will Be Free!" and black, with the legendary rain of digits from the "Matrix" movie, Zubr logo and the inscription "Welcome to Reality". The police and "plain clothes" continued pulling people out of the column and arresting them. Near the "Riga" supermarket the columns united and it became visible that there were about two thousand people. Among them there were deputies of the "Respublika" group. At 7.15 the column reached the Banhalor Square where at least five thousand people gathered. Action participants held posters "The authorities of the majority of the countries consider him a dangerous criminal!", "Time to liberate mind", "You can spend your life under dictatorship if you are weak and passive", "Freedom to Marynich", "Freedom to Lievanieuski", banners of parties, democratic movements, and the European Union. The meeting concert was anchored by the well-known musician Aliaksandr Pamidorau. In his speech the deputy of the "Respublika" Parfianovich said: "For the 10 years of his rule Lukashenka has been leading Belarus to poverty, but we will struggle for our country". All in all, some 50-60 persons were arrested in the evening of 21 July. Many of them were beaten and needed medical treatment. Among the arrested were:

1. Paviel Khivuk – member of Human Rights Center Viasna from Brest (forced into the car with the license plate 0739 MA);

2. Dzmitry Bandarenka – coordinator of the civil initiative "Char¬ter-97";

3. Dzianis Bystryk;

4. Paviel Dzemidziuk – (Brest citizen, beaten in the police bus);

5. Fiodar Pauliuchenka;

6. Aliaksei Liaukovich;

7. Iauhien Afnahiel;

8. Paviel Iukhnievich;

9. Liuba Kuchynskaia;

10. Siarhiei Sarahavets;

11. Nastasia Azarka;

12. Alies Vasilieuski;

13. Andrei Asmalouski (citizen of Maladechna);

14. Ihar Kliuko;

15. Dzmitry Vaitko;

16. Siarhiei Lietka;

17. Paviel Mikulovich;

18. Ruslan Kharkievich;

19. Artur Finkievich

20. Maksim Viniarski;

21. Anatol Bielski (citizen of Barysau);

22. Ihar Zhezautsau;

23. Paviel Bielanouski;

24. Alieh Korban;

25. Alies Monich;

26. Aliaksandr Bielanouski;

27. Aliaksandr Kozik;

28. Dzmitry Monich;
29. Mikalai Shaplyga;
30. Iauhien Palishchuk;
31. Ivan Shutko;
32. Aliaksei Malchanau;
33. Katiaryna Smirnova;
34. Kiryl Rabykin;
35. Mark Shubarau;
36. Hlieb Malinouski;
37. Artsiom Skarabahaty;
38. Maksim Koziel (citizen of Navahrudak);
39. Iaraslau Yaudachkou;
40. Mikhail Kandrashou;
41. Maksim Hromau;
42. Aliaksei Vaskovich;
43. Iulia Harachka;
44. Dzmitry Dashkievich;
45. Barys Haretski;
46. Viktar Iantsurevich;
47. Valiery Mazynski;
48. Uladzimir Kishkurna;
49. Anton Kishkurna.

On ***21 July*** At 8.20 p.m. the car of Uladzimir Kishkurna was detained at the authorized meeting in Banhalor Square. The police escorted the car with banners, posters and the driver Uladzimir Kishkurna to Minsk Savietski Borough Board of Internal Affairs. At 9.15 p.m. Minsk police detained the deputy of Minsk District Deputy Soviet Iury

Ziankovich on the way home from the action of protest against the tenth anniversary of Lukashenka's rule. After the action about 40 persons who were going to Minsk Savietski Borough Board of Internal Affairs (BBIA) to support the detainees who were kept there, were detained on the way, driven about far out of Minsk and left in the wood. The police mocked and beat them on the way. Late in the evening it became known that the trials of the detained action participants would take place on 22 July at Minsk Savietski Borough Court. Numerous detainees had to spend the night at the detention center in Akrestsin Street.

On ***21 July*** protests against the authoritarian regime established by A. Lukashenka swept across Belarus.

No one was detained in Homiel during the protest action. The action meant to produce a derisive effect. At about 6 p.m. youth came to the central supermarket of Homiel, holding posters and "expressing great love to president". However, they held the posters below the belt. The head of Homiel Tsentralny Borough Board of Internal Affairs Stryzhniow threatened to detain the actions participants, but then decided not to do it because it is not prohibited to stand with portraits of A. Lukashenka in public places.

Vitsiebsk saw a picket held to mark the 10th anniversary of Aliaksandr Lukashenka's rule. The people went out to the central street of the city with portraits of the disappeared Iury Zakharanka. Viktar Hanchar, Anatol Krasouski and Dzmitry Zavadski. The action aimed to remind the compatriots that their co-citizens disappearing is also an indicator of the policies conducted by Mr. Lukashenka in Belarus. Among the people detained by the police during the action the police was the journalist of Radio "Liberty" Branislava Stankievich, despite of her showing the journalist certificate and the certificate of the Belarusian Association of Journalists. The detaining police officers did not identify themselves. Branislava Stankievich was released after her ID documents had been checked in Chyhunachny Borough Department of Police. The police made reports registering administrative violations allegedly committed by three picketers: Ulada Tokarava, Liudmila Tsierashonak, Roza Pushkarova.

On ***21 July*** The activist of the Zubr movement Mikhail Audzeieu was one of those who were severely beaten at the action. He was taken to the 1st trauma department of ambulance hospital and operated. The doctors suspected splenic rupture. Fortunately, it didn't prove – they found a large haematoma around his spleen that appeared as a result of a hard blow.

On ***21 July*** the Belarusian Government informed the administration of the European Humanities University of its decision to cancel the rental agreement with the EHU for the

premises where the university organized most of the academic programs. This step aimed to get EHU Rector Anatol Mikhailau to step down, and make the EHU stop its activities, and put into jeopardy the future of the university, its students and lecturers and their contribution into the intellectual life and academic freedoms in Belarus.

On ***22 July*** judges of Minsk Savietski Borough Court worked in the conveyer regime. Some of the judges who hadn't conducted admi-nistrative trials before were drawn to the trials of the action participants. For instance, the Zubr activist Paviel Iukhnievich was judged by the judge Aliaksandr Abdulin, who usually dealt with criminal and civil cases, not with administrative ones.

Find below results of the trials:

Dzmitry Bandarenka, one of the leaders of "Charter-97", sentenced to 15 days in jail by judge Ruslan Kazadaieu;

Alieh Korban, sentenced to 10 days in jail by judge Skuharava;

Dzmitry Vaitko, fined 10 basic units (about $90) by judge Siaklitski;

Anatol Bielski, sentenced to 3 days in jail by Judge Skuharava;

Aliaksandr Belanouski, fined 20 basic units (about $180) by judge Inesa Lazavikova;

Paviel Bielanouski, fined 40 basic units (about $360) by judge Lazavikova;

Paviel Iukhnievich, sentenced to 10 days in jail by judge Abdulin;

Alies Monich, sentenced to 3 days in jail by judge Kazadaieu;

Aliaksiei Liaukovich, fined 50 basic units (about $450) by judge Siarhiei Siaklitski;

Nastasia Azarka, sentenced to 5 days in jail by judge Aliena Kraichyk;

Liubou Kuchynskaia, fined 20 basic units by judge Skuharava;

Artur Siankievich, sentenced to 10 days in jail by judge Kazadaieu;

Siarhiei Liatko, fined 20 basic units by judge Aliaksandr Abdulin;

Ihar Kliuko, sentenced to 3 days in jail by judge Kazadaieu;

Iauhien Afnahiel, sentenced to 10 days in jail by judge Natallia Skuharava;

Paviel Mikulovich, fined 20 basic units by judge Kazadaieu;

Ihar Niezawtsau, sentenced to 5 days in jail by judge Skuharava;

Fiodar Pauliuchenka, warned by judge Kazadaieu;

Aliaksandr Kozik, sentenced to 3 days in jail;

Siarhiei Sarahaviets, fined 30 basic units;

Paviel Dzemidziuk, warned by judge Skuharava;

Alies Vasilieuski sentenced to 5 days in jail by judge Kazaday;

Dzianis Bystryk, sentenced to 3 days in jail by judge Kraychyk;

Andrei Asmalouski, fined 30 basic units by judge Skuharava;

Paviel Khivuk, sentenced to 3 days in jail by judge S. Barazna;

Maksim Viniarski, sentenced to 10 days in jail by judge Skuharava.

On ***22 July*** the Human Rights Center Viasna argued that the 21 July protest action participants had been punished too severely. The head of the HRC Viasna Alies Bialiatski is of the opinion that the punishment to the action participant Nastasia Azarka (5 days in jail) really ferocious, all the more so that it was imposed by a female judge, Aliena Kraychyk. «The detention center in Akrestsin Street has no conditions for women. Arrest there brings additional sufferings to women. I don't think the judge would give such a punishment if she had the chance to spend some time there, — said Alies Bialiatski. – Finally, all judges who take part in today's legal lynching will have to bear responsibility for it. The history doesn't end with Lukashenka's rule and someday yesterday's events will have other juridical evaluation».

On ***22 July*** Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs adopted a statement regarding the intention of Belarusian authorities to close the office of the correspondent of the TV channel "Russia" in Minsk. According to the official representative of the ministry Aleksandr Yakovenko, it could have negative impact on the opportunity of Russian citizens to receive information from this country. The ministry is of the opinion that elucidation of the Belarusian events by RTR can't be a reason for such steps. The day before Belarusian TV spread information about the liquidation of the office of RTR correspondent in Minsk, referring to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus. The decision was taken because of allegedly distorted elucidation of the meeting of 21 July in Belarus. On that day RTR correspondent Dzmitry Piatrou said in the report that was broadcast in the "Vesti" news program that seVieral thousand citizens took part in the meeting, whereas Lukashenka's officials stated there were only 193 individuals there.

On ***22 July*** Agnieszka Komarowska, head of Belarusian programs of Stefan Batory Foundation (Poland), came to Minsk on a mission, but wasn't let out of the airport "Minsk-2". Workers of Belarusian passport and visa service said it would be better for her to leave Belarus. They insisted on her buying a ticket to Vienna, from where she would have to return to Warsaw. Agneszka Komarowska spent the night of 23 July at the airport.

On ***22 July*** the Collegium of Minsk City Economic Court started hea-ring the appeal by the taxation committee against the verdict in the case against Belarusian Helsinki Committee. Two weeks before the City Economic Court recognized as ungrounded claims against BHC, which required that the human rights activists should pay taxes of about 80 thousand dollars from the money assistance within the TACIS programs. However, the taxation committee of Maskouski Borough of Minsk did not agree to the ruling. The judges again asked the government to provide documents regulating taxation of TACIS grants.

On ***23 July*** the human rights group Amnesty International gave to all arrested for taking part in the action to mark the 10th anniversary of Lukashenka's rule the status of prisoners of conscience.

On ***23 July*** the Ministry of Education required that the leadership of European Humanities University immediately dismiss Prof. Anatol Mikhailau as University Rector. First, Minister of Education Aliaksandr Radzkou proposed to the university administration negotiations regarding guarantees for the university existence in case Anatol Mikhailau stepped down. However, he suddenly walked out of the negotiations and urgently required the rector should resign, threatening trouble otherwise. According to EHU administration, Anatol Mikhailau, who is a visiting a foreign country now, asked the faculty to say what they think of the situation, and received support just as before. We would like to remind you that Education Minister Aliaksandr Radzkou demanded that Academician Anatol Mikhailau, a founder of the European Humanities University, resign from the position of the rector at the beginning of January. The university faculty then said that the forced removal of Mr. Mikhailau would jeopardize the existence of the university as such, and would have an adverse impact on the image of Belarus in the world. Anatol Mikhailau was also supported by ambassadors of seVieral European countries in Belarus.

On ***23 July*** Viera Stramkouskaia, defense lawyer for Mr. Marynich, appealed to the General Procurator Sheiman requesting that the defendant be allowed a different form of custody. The lawyer quoted the deteriorated state of the defendant's health due to

the summer heat. Viera Stramkouskaia is convinced that further keeping Mikhail Marynich in the KGB detention ward would threaten his health. The lawyer refers to the recent medical check-up of Mikhail Marynich's health, and her personal impressions of her last meeting him in the detention ward.

On ***26 July*** Ministry of Foreign Affairs officially stated that the activity of RTR journalists in Belarus had been stopped. The reason quoted is the repeated untruthful coVierage of the Belarusian events and biased reporting of the opposition-led actions on 21 July, and, in particular, the number of participants named by an RTR reporter, which was alleged to be too high. However, Moscow has not received any documents from Minsk, confirming the closure of the reporter's station. The RTR management only know what the Belarusian TV Company has disclosed.

On ***26 July*** Liudmila Karpienka, head of the Office of the Public Procurator in Eslinge, Germany, and widow of the renowned Belarusian politician Hienadz Karpienka, sent a letter to the ambassador of Greece to Russia and Belarus. She asks the ambassador not to issue a visa to Iury Sivakou, Minister of Sport and Tourism, who may be behind the disappearance of the famous Belarusian politicians. Minister Sivakou heads the Belarusian sports delegation due to come to Athens for the Olympic Games (13-29 August).

On ***26 July*** the Ministry of Education of Belarus deprived European Humanities University (EHU) of the license. In other words, its activity is prohibited. The ministry ordered EHU to move out of the rented building yet on 21 July (EHU didn't manage to build its own one because it wasn't given any place for it). As soon as it became known about the prohibition of the educational activity for EHU, a part of students filed applications for transfer to other educational establishments. During the first two days all of them received refusals. For those who just entered the university it was often too late to file documents for entrance exams to other institutions. The situation remained unsolved for two days. All interested persons, both students and lecturers, were looking for ways out – new places of work and study. On 28 July EHU was declared officially closed down. Formally, transfer from it to any other educational establishment is impossible. So, a month before new curriculum year Belarusian authorities created problems for about thousand people.

On ***26 July*** the students of European Humanities University organized an action of protest against its liquidation. Many of them refuse to be transferred to other educational establishments and intend to defend their right to study in EHU. Simultaneously, the university autho¬rities held a press-conference which stated that

European Humanities University would continue existing in some other forms. The action of protest was conducted in the form of artistic performance – with usage of textbooks, posters and artworks. Students call the activities of the authorities politically motivated. They support their lecturers and the rector Anatol Mikhailau. At present, Anatol Mikhailau and the vice-rector Uladzimir Dunaieu are in the USA, where they conduct negotiations with the founders of international educational centers concerning financing for EHU.

On ***26 July*** European Parliament deputies expressed their concern over the «moves by the Belarusian authorities who have been attempting to liquidate the Belarusian Party of Labor and the BPF Party». The authors of the appeal are two deputies of the European Parliament who represent Poland: Konrad Szymanski and Martin Libicki, both of the Law and Justice Party; a deputy representing Lithuania Vitautas Landsbergis, the famous politician, and also two deputies of Czech Republic and Hungary.

On ***26 July*** the US Department of State expressed its concern over attacks on the European Humanities University and the dispersion of protesters on 21 July. «The United States are deeply concerned over the repressions against civil society in Belarus, in particular, the recent attack launched by the Belarusian government on the academic freedoms and the rights of assembly», said the appeal.

On ***26 July*** it became known that after they took part in the 21 July action concert, the singers of the Palats lost their jobs in the state-governed company Belkantsert. According to unofficial recommenda¬tions, employees of the state-owned radio company are advised not to play back Palats music. In the editorial office of the Stalitsa radio company someone even put up a notice advising against playing back the Palats. True, the notice had neither the signature, nor the stamp. Some employees say that there is no official ban, but recommendations are enough in such cases.

On ***27 July*** the Collegium of Hrodna Region Court upheld the current form of custody for Valiery Lievanieuski: he will stay in the investigative ward until mid-August. The Regional Court heard the complaint by Mr. Lievanieuski and his lawyer against the ruling by Leninski Borough Court, which ruled that the detention of the defendant in custody continued until 15 August was legal. Lievanieuski did not attend the court hearing because he had been on hunger-strike for six days now, protesting the custody conditions.

On ***28 July*** Valiery Lievanieuski was exculpated from the charge implicating him in the organization of an unauthorized rally in Hrodna on 1 May. Just as before, the leader

of the businessmen's strike committee is accused of publicly insulting President Lukashenka. The new regulation that implicates Lievanieuski's associate Aliaksandr Vasilieu in a criminally punished offence. Now he faces two charges: that of publicly insulting the president, and that of organizing an unauthorized meeting.

On ***29 July*** the administration of the European Humanities Univer-sity closed by the order of the Ministry of Education started transferring the students into other universities of Minsk. The regulation specially issued by the Ministry of Education, which requires EHU students should be admitted to other universities, was signed by the rectors of all universities. However, the state-owned universities are not prepared to admit them due to the absence of sufficient material resources. The A-students who did not have to pay any tuition fees in the university because their parents could not afford their education there are now deprived of continuing with their studies. They say that because of this reason they would have to stop their further education. Many EHU students have no choice at all. Because Belarus does not have a single university that would have the same kind of departments and syllabi.

On ***29 July*** Minsk Economic Court pronounced its verdict on the complaint of the tax inspection against the decision of the court of the first instance. The instance confirmed the groundlessness of the financial sanctions imposed on Belarusian Helsinki Committee for alleged non-payment of taxes from the grant issued within the TACIS program. Now the justification of BHC comes into legal force.

On ***29 July*** at noon outside the Belarusian embassy in Warsaw an action was staged, which protested the infringement of the political rights of the Belarusian citizens. The action participants also included about 50 deputies and the vice-speaker of the Polish Seim of the Civil Platform Party that staged the action. Those who were there held the posters saying «Bring Lukashenka to justice!», «Stop Lukashenka!». It should be noted that the Liberal Party Civil Platform is the most popular political force in Poland now.

On ***29 July*** the police took away passport from the UK citizen, lecturer on nuclear physics at Kingston University Alan Flowers who lectured at Andreiy Sakharov institute. Since 1992 doctor Flowers dealt with issues, related to Chernobyl catastrophe, recreation of Belarusian children and humanitarian contacts. Doctor Flowers was invited to Belarus to read lectures at Sakharov institute. Besides, doctor Flowers is one of the founders and curators of the European Parliament. He said to RFE/RL that he would be probably deported by Belarusian authorities on Saturday. Professor Flowers is honorable professor of Sakharov institute, in the building of which the incident took place. The authorities charge the professor with violation of the registration regime that was established for

foreigners, whereas Flowers states he has legal visa and registration for his stay in Belarus. The authorities can be dissatisfied with the activities of doctor Flowers, such as his participation in the summer camp of European Youth Parliament that was held in Belarusian town of Kobryn.

On ***29 July*** Navapolatsk-based members of the Free Trade Union staged a picket against forced conversion of peopled employed by state enterprises into employment contracts. This was a fourteenths «anti-contract» street protest staged by the Free Trade Union in the country. The picket went off without detentions and lasted for one hour and a half.

On ***29 July*** it became known that most of the graduates of the National Humanities Lyceum named after Iakub Kolas will leave the country to study in Poland, the Czech Republic and Lithuania. Some graduates decided to carry on with their studies in Belarus. Almost half of the graduates applied to state universities. Some submitted entrance documents just to test their abilities, others – to enter university and get education in Belarus. Now lyceum is holding an entrance exams session. A group of students to study in the first year of the underground lyceum is now being formed.

On ***30 July*** the Supreme Court started to hear the case of liquidating the Belarusian Labor Party

On ***30 July*** the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus has already deprived of accreditation all workers of the office of correspondent of the “Russia” TV channel in Minsk. The head of the office Andrei Kachura said that in 29 July he was summoned to the MFA and asked to return all accreditation certificates. MFA workers read to Kachura an outtake from the sitting of the MFA college where the “

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On ***2 August*** the Supreme Court of Belarus the Ministry of Justice liquidated Belarusian Labor Party. The ministry charged the party with having no legal address for a long time, holding its last assembly with gross law violations, untimely registration of its regional structures and interference with the activity of trade union. Judge Hanna Sakalouskaia found all these charges grounded and ruled to liquidate Belarusian Labor Party. The leader of the party Aliaksandr Bukhvostau thusly commented on this verdict: "I think that this political order is the beginning of liquidation of opposition political parties. We will complain against this decision to the authorities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. On the other hand, this verdict won't stop us from participation in the electoral campaign".

On ***2 August*** officers of Minsk Leninski Borough Court attached the property of the editorial office of the Narodnaia Volia newspaper on the sum of 59 million rubles for execution of two court verdicts on compensation of moral harm: on the suit of the entrepreneur Siarhiei Atroshchanka (15 million rubles) and the suit of former head of Belarusian TV Iahor Rybakou (50 million rubles). The editorial office of "Narodnaia Volia" continues its work in the usual regime, though on the attached equipment. The newspaper has 10 days to pay the compensation to S. Atroshchanka, otherwise a part of the attached equipment will be sold. The court officers haven't defined the term for payment to Iahor Rybakou yet, because the plaintiff is under investigation.

On ***2 August*** at night unknown persons stained the entrance door and the window of the office of Belarusian People's Front Party with red paint. They also left a drawing of hammer and sickle, inscription "Hands off Our Father!" and abbreviation "AKM" under it. Minsk Savietski Borough Board of Internal Affairs holds a check-up of this incident. The BPF leaders are of the opinion that it was done by some teenagers, influenced by anti-opposition propaganda in state mass media.

On ***2 August*** outside a village near the Russian radar station Volha the police detained seVieral dozens of people participating in the eco-political march of protest against the presence of Russian bases, which was staged by the BPF Party. The young people spent the night in the forest under the police supervision, and were taken to the Klietsk police on 3 August. Klietsk police made the underage participants of the action – six people – go back home, and Paviel Batuieu received a subpoena to appear in court.

On 2 July the European Humanities University filed a suit with the Economic Court against the Ministry of Education, in which it demands that the EHU was deprived of the license illegally. But for the suit to be heard, documentary evidence proving eviction and

license cancellation is needed, which the authorities do not hurry to produce. Nonetheless, the EHU administration plans to litigate though is sure that attempts to restore justice in court will be fruitless, and calls this step a moral obligation in the case of defending principles of university autonomy and academic freedoms.

On ***2 August*** an unauthorized protest staged by students of the European Humanities University took place in Kastrychnitskya Square in Minsk. They protested against the closure of the EHU, and the students being transferred to other universities. The protesters pretended they were reading something: seVieral dozens of students came to Kastrychnitskaia Square with books, opened them, sat down on the ground and started reading. Police officers were there, but chose not to detain anyone. They approached the students, asked them what they were doing and why, warned them of the illegality of the action being held in Kastrychnitskaia Square, but did not resort to force with respect to the protesters. Throughout the action, the students emphasized their action was by no means political but artistic and cultural. Which was why they did not accept the proposal by the students of the Belarusian Lyceum about a joint protest due on 5 August – they argue that the lyceum students' effort to preserve their Alma Mater is at least partly politically-motivated.

On ***2 August*** Hrodna prosecutors completed fact-finding activities in the criminal case of publicly degrading President Lukashenka. Defen-dants are two: they are the heads of the unregistered strike committee of businessmen Valiery Lievanieuski and Aliaksandr Vasilieu. On that day they saw the materials of their criminal case, which was in six volumes. Alfred Tankievich, senior investigator of Leninski Borough Procurator's Office, was in charge of the investigation.

On ***3 August*** three activists of Salihorsk organization of the United Civil Party held a picket against the third presidential term to Aliaksandr Lukashenka in the center of Minsk. All of them were detained by special police forces. At about 6 p.m. the UCP members from Salihorsk Aliaksiei Prykhodzka, Tatsiana Laryionava and Natallia Zubarevich unrolled the banner: "10 years of dictatorship. Lukashenka, go away!". They managed to hand out to passers-by the fly sheet with the heading "Where have 10 years of our lives gone?", where the disappearances of well-known Belarusian activists were mentioned along with the persons against whom criminal cases were brought. A special police officer called for help, and the pickets were detained. The police of the Tsentralny Borough said that all of the detained would be taken to a special distribution center in Akrestsina Street, to be taken to the court of Tsentralny Borough Court the following day. They are accused of violations committed during the street mass action.

On ***4 August*** Tsentralny Borough Court of Minsk found United Civil Party activists from Salihorsk guilty of conducting a picket in Kastrych-nitskaya Square in Minsk. UCP activist Aliaksei Prykhodzka was arrested to 15 days, and Natallia Zubarevich – to 10 days. Tatsiana Laryionova has a seven-year old child, and, according to the Belarusian legislation, the court cannot inflict arrest on her. Judge Lieanid Iasinovich fined Tatsiana 30 basic units (about 570 000 rubles).

On ***4 August*** Paviel Batuieu, an organizer of the action «Radar Stations are a Threat to Belarus», was summonsed to appear in Klietsk District Court on 9 August. In the evening of 4 August action participants were again detained. This time by Russian servicemen headed by a colonel. According to the action participant Iury Ziankovich, the deten¬tion occurred as the group was leaving the territory of Klietsk District toward Hantsavichy. The group of the young people made a stop within 500 meters of the Russian military radar station Volha. In seVieral minutes they were stopped and handed over to Klietsk police.

From ***4 August*** According to the information of Belarusian As-sociation of Journalists, it is prohibited to Belarusian radio stations to broadcast music by the groups that played at the meeting of 21 July. This information was unofficially confirmed by a number of state and commercial radio stations. Listeners of the first program of Belarusian radio, “Stalitsa” radio and other FM stations will, most probably, have no opportunity to listen to such groups as “Palats”, “N.R.M.”, “Zet”, “Pomidor/off”, “Drum Extasy” and “Neuro Dubel”. However, workers of the department of analysis and coordination of activity of electronic mass media of the Ministry of Information state that this information is false. «There’s no such document», stated to BAJ press service the worker of the department Dzmitry Konanau. According to BAJ, workers of Belarusian radio stations received oral recommendation not to give ether to songs, sung by the mentioned groups. There’s even information that this music has been already removed from the computers of the radio stations. The newspaper “Komsomolskaya Pravda v Belorussiyi” managed to find out that last week the black list of rock groups appeared in printing at the office of “Stalitsa” radio. However, when the journalists showed interest to it, the list disappeared. The oral order from «above» to remove the named musicians from play lists on the radio were also received by the employees of some Minsk-based FM-stations. The leader of the “N.R.M.” and “Zet” groups Liavon Volski commented on it this step of the officials. «They do more that is demanded from them. On hearing from the head of the state about “Palats” and “Neuro Dubel” they started total clear-up. It’s quite natural that state radio stations execute such orders, buts it’s quite another way for commercial, non-state radio: executing such orders they will bury themselves”.

On ***4 August*** Volha Zavadskaia, mother of the ORT cameraman Dzmitry Zavadski who disappeared in July 2000, filed with the Pro¬secutor's Office of the Republic of Belarus demand to renew the in¬vestigation into disappearance of her son in connection with new cir¬cumstances and interrogate A. Lukashenka as a witness. At the press conference of 20 July 2004 President of the Republic of Belarus A. Lu¬kashenka made a statement concerning the criminal cases initiated to investigate into disappearances of citizens of the Republic of Belarus: "What surprises me: if the relatives worry so much, why don't you come to me. One person came to me, woman, you know the reason why I can't call her surname. She came to me, I accepted her. She asked me about one man, I again don't call his surname. I was impressed by this woman. She's brave. I spoke with her for three hours and showed to her certain documents. If I gave publicity to them now, Zavadski's case would turn into "anti-case". By the way, it's my only pain – Dima Zavadsky. I am also very interested to find about the fate of this man." On 4 August the on-duty procurator Barys Zhyldzietski received and registered the application with the Republic Procurator's Office.

On ***4 August*** Vitsiebsk Chyhunachny Borough Court fined Barys Khamaida for distribution of "Belarusian Delovaya Gazeta" newspaper, which was considered as business activity. The court ignored Khamaida's statement that he didn't benefit from his activity, as well as similar testimonies of witnesses. Mr. Khamaida considers this verdict illegal and isn't going to stop his activity. Together with "BDG" he handed out his own newspaper "Vybar" issued since 1990.

On ***4 August*** the non-state newspaper Rabochaia salidarnasts (Workmen's Solidarity) ceases to exist because on 2 August the Supreme Court of Belarus passed a ruling to liquidate the Belarusian Party of Labor (BPL). The registration department of the Ministry of Information confirmed that because BPL acted as the editor to the Rabochaya Salidarnasts, the newspaper would be liquidated automatically. The Ministry will prepare a corresponding order within days.

On ***4 August*** in the evening seVieral dozens of the European Huma-nities University students came to the university building to part with it in a symbolic manner – spend their the night. However, police and people in plain clothes were already waiting for them there. They said they could not stay there, or otherwise they would be detained for administrative offences. The students broke up, but some stayed there for the whole night.

On ***5 August*** the newsprint of the newspaper Narodnaia Volia was arrested in Minsk-based publishing house "Czyrvonaia Zorka." The director of the publishing house

was given a written direction to suspend the publishing of Narodnaia Volia until the editors will pay all of the damages to the former head of the National State TV and Radio Company Iahor Rybakou and the entrepreneur Siarhiei Atroshchanka.

On ***5 August*** Greece denied entrance to the minister of sport and tourism Iury Sivakou who was to have headed Belarusian delegation at the Olympics in Athens. The reason for this step was the report of the PACE special rapporteur Christos Pourgourides where possible relation of Iury Sivakou to disappearances of well-known people was mentioned. Anonymous EU official said to RFE/RL that the decision of the Greek authorities was agreed with representatives of all other EU countries. We should remind that in 1999 there disappeared the former minister of internal affairs Iury Zakharanka, the former head of the Central Electoral Commission Viktar Hanchar and his friend, businessman Anatol Krasouski and in 2000 – the journalist Dzmitry Zavadski. Among the recommendations in this year’s report of the PACE rapporteur Christos Pourgourides there was the proposal to initiate criminal investigation for finding about the possible relation of duty officials of Belarus to the disappearances. Among the suspects there is Mr. Sivakou who was the minister of internal affairs at that time, the present prosecutor general Viktar Sheiman and the vice-colonel of internal affairs Dzmitry Pau¬lichenka. This decision was commented by the head of the PACE commission on Belarus Yonas Chekuolis: “This decision can be a result of the discussions we head at PACE in April, when the situation with the missing public activists in Belarus was discussed. The report of the Cypress deputy Pourgourides contained surnames of the persons that could have relation to these disappearances. Sivakou was among them. We are grateful to European states for having paid attention to our conclusion, the conclusion of the Council of Europe”. Apart from Sivakou, Greece banned entry to Ministers of Sport from Burma and Zimbabwe. These officials were denied entry to all countries of the European Union because of their involvement with human rights violations in their countries.

On ***5 August*** Procurator General of Belarus Viktar Sheiman set aside the petition requesting a change in the custody conditions for the former minister of external economic relations, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus, Mikhail Marynich. The worker of the Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Belarus Ivan Sukha-vierka informed the advocate of Mikhail Marynich Viera Stramkouskaia that there were “no reasons to discharge” her client. The advocate filed the petition for changing of the restraint on 21 July. Viera Stramkouskaia states that there are no reasons to keep M. Marynich in custody at the KGB investigative ward, because the article upon which he is charged (illegal storage of arms) doesn’t demand obligatory custody and the politician is not summoned to interrogations.

On ***6 August*** seVieral police officers came to the apartment of Nasta Vasilienka, a member of Zubr youth movement, in Baranavichy. The policemen had a search warrant. Nasta was told they were investigating a theft of a mobile phone and suspected that the phone was in her apartment. Naturally, they did not find a mobile phone during the search. However, the police found a seized independent newspapers and leaflets, Zubr and "Osvobozhdenie" (Liberation) newsletters among them. Nasta Vasilienka is especially concerned about confiscation of her phonebook with phone numbers and addresses of her friends and colleagues. The search of Nasta Vasilienka's flat is an element of the planned campaign to intimidate opposition and young activists in the run-up to the parliamentary election.

On ***6 August*** Deputy Valiery Fralou went to court of Maskouski Bo-rough of Minsk, requesting that his honor and dignity be defended, and the material damage be compensated. The reason of the appeal is an article printed in the Obozrevatel newspaper (Observer) on 15 August 2003 under the name of «Deputies Kastsian, Navasiad and Fralou are personal Anti-Semites?». The article which referred to the words of Lieanid Lievin, Chair of Jewish Organizations and Communities of Belarus argued that the deputies Fralou and Navasiad profess special kind of Anti-Semitism, and, moreover, «promote hate for Jews wherever they are». After the article was printed, Lieanid Lievin phoned the deputies Fralou and Navasiad and said that he had never said such words before. Lieanid Lievin also sent a letter to the editorial office demanding refutation. However, it was not printed. Deputy Valiery Fralou demands that the editorial office of the Obozrevatel print refutation and pay him moral damages worth 100 million rubles.

On ***9 August*** the Board of Minsk city court did not satisfy the complaint of BPF Party. BPF complained against the actions of Piershamaiski court. On July 12 the court refused to consider the BPF suit to the state TV company and journalist Iury Prakopau for defamation of the party. Piershamaiski borough court decided: "This debate is in the sphere of political discussion which is forming the political views of citizens. That's why it is not subject of court consideration". On 9 August the Board of Minsk city court upheld the decision. Human Rights Center «Viasna» lawyer Valiantsin Stefanovich says: "We do not agree with such a decision. The party was deprived of the right to justice. What do they mean by a political debate? They just spread information which is simply not the truth".

On ***9 August*** police detained Valiery Karaliou, member of Miory UCP organization, at a railway station. Valiery was spreading information materials of the People's Coalition Five Plus and independent press. The police detained the guy, took him to a police

station, and confiscated the materials. Besides that, the policeman on duty called to KGB. Two guys from the security services arrived without delay. They asked different questions. They were especially interested in Karaliou's circle of interests and acquaintance. They also asked what the goal of his recent trip to Poland was.

On ***9 August*** the Ministry of Sport and Tourism placed on its web-site (www.mst.by) a letter by Minister Iury Sivakou regarding the European Union and Greek authorities' decision to deny him entry to their territory. Commenting the decision taken by the European Union, Minister Sivakou said that from moral and psychological standpoint, this is a serious trauma, and not only for him. He accused the US administration and the European Union, which are alleged to be «openly violating the principles of the Olympic movement». «We, Slavs together with Russia, should be more active in defending the established international regulations and rules, rather than be passive onlookers», says the Minister in his letter. «From the viewpoint of presumption of innocence and the crux of the matter around which the whole problem centers, I can only say one thing», goes on Minister Iury Sivakou, «no one has the right to call someone a criminal before his guilt is proven in court. If European Union officials had substantial evidence against me, their actions would definitely be quite different».

On ***9 August*** Klietsk District Court started hearing the cases of the BPF Party member Paviel Batuieu, who is accused of organizing an unauthorized procession through the villages of Klietsk District. The action participants protested against the Russian radar station Volha. On 9 August the court requested that the police specify charges against Paviel Batuieu: is he accused of organizing or taking part in the unauthorized procession.

On ***10 August*** Minister of Sport and Tourism Iury Sivakou said that he would not go to Athens. He is going to remain in charge of the Olympic delegation from Minsk. At the same time, the official web-site of the Ministry of Sport posted a new adjusted version of Minister Sivakou's letter. In particular, in an earlier version Mr. Sivakou openly accused the US administration and European Union of openly violating the principles of the Olympic movement». Now Mr. Sivakou offers a different version. He says that the US Administration and the European Union have their own model of democracy. The former head-quarters of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) based in Switzerland argued that they had not received any official protests from Minsk or Minister of Sport Iury Sivakou.

On ***11 August*** the Brest Regional Court reversed the warning issued to the local deputy Uladzimir Maliei, member of BPF party and a lawyer of the HRC Viasna. Uladzimir

Maliei received the warning for holding a meeting with voters on 25 April in the village of Struha, which concerned the construction of a radioactive waste mortuary. At odds with the court ruling, Uladzimir Maliei filed a complaint with Chair of Brest Regional Court. As a result, the ruling by the Court of Malaryta District was reversed because «according to part 1 of Article 247 of the Code of Administrative Offences, the consideration of administrative violation cases as provided under Article 167-1 of CAO requires the presence of the person being brought to administrative account». The administrative case against Uladzimir Maliei was sent for new consideration – «to the same court but to a different judge». «While hearing the case again, the decision to be taken must comply with the law», says the ruling.

On ***11 August*** Belarusian authorities refused to issue a visa to US Senator John McCain. «I am disappointed - but frankly not surprised - by the latest anti-democratic action by President Aliaksandr Lukashenka of Belarus. I planned to lead a delegation of four U.S. Senators to Belarus, where we hoped to have seVieral meetings, including one with the President. Because he feared that we might criticize his totalitarian rule, Mr. Lukashenka refused us visas, rejected our visit, and denied us entry into the country».

On ***11 August*** it became known that Dzmitry Paulichenka, suspec-ted of abduction and possible murder of Lukashenka's political oppo-nents, was awarded with the order of the Russian Orthodox Church. Colonel Paulichenka was rewarded for active participation in construction of a church on the territory of the military unit he commanded. Archbishop Filaret interceded with Aleksei II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, for Paulichenka to get the award. Senior priest Aliaksandr Iatskievich explained, that Paulichenka "directly participated in construction, and supported both physically and morally". On the question if the Church knows that Paulichenka is one of the key figures in Christos Pourgourides' report on the missing public and political figures, father Aliaksandr replied: "I don't know absolutely anything. The Church and the eparchy do not participate in any kind of political actions. We have nothing to do with it, and know nothing about that". Families of the disappeared are indignant about the award. The wife of the disappeared politician Zinaida Hanchar said: «I do not understand anything in this situation. Paulichenka is suspected of heinous crimes, which runs through numerous documents. This situation needs to be cleared up. I have an impression that we have all found ourselves in a mental hospital. Awarding people with a stained reputation and saying, at the same time, that the church is above politics is at best stupidity. When the church is above politics, it should also be above disease». Volha Zavadskaia, mother of the disappeared cameraman Dzmitry Zavadski, noted: «This is outrageous. Filaret is a

state figure. They just spat into our hearts (at least into mine), without even trying to sort it all out».

On ***12 August*** at 7 p.m. the traffic police at Zhlobin detained the car of Uladzimir Katsora, chair of Homiel Regional Branch of the United Civil Party. In the district department of police, the police officers searched the car, filming the entire process with a video camera. After the search, the police confiscated seVieral thousand copies of the independent newspaper Vremya and fly-sheets «Five Steps Toward Better Life».

On ***12 August*** Valiery Lievanieuski, head of the unregistered strike committee of the country's businessmen, who is now in the investigative ward of Hrodna prison #1, said he intended to seek nomination for the Chamber of Representatives by means of collecting signatures. It is planned that his son Uladzimir will be the head of his initiative group. Valiery Lievanieuski plans to seek nomination in Hrodna-Paunochnaia electoral district #53, where he lives. The district election commission told his son Uladzimir that his father could seek nomination despite being kept in the investigative ward. True, according to the Election Code, the candidate must submit the documents to the commission himself. But Uladzimir was also told that he could submit them instead provided his father had signed them.

On ***13 August*** it became known that Valiery Lievanieuski's and Aliaksandr Vasilieu's initiative groups were not registered. The formal reason is that the application was filed by his son Uladzimer and not him personally. Actually, Mr. Lievanieuski gave his son the power of attorney. However, the head of the prison did not confirm it. Aliaksandr Vasilieu's initiative group was not registered for alleged mistakes in his application.

On ***16 August*** Piershamaiski court of Minsk continued hearings on UCP leader's suit against BT, ONT, and STV channels. Anatol Liabiedzka accuses the TV channels in insult of his honor, dignity and business reputation. The ground for the suit was the broadcast film "Road to Nowhere". The whole film is aimed at persuading TV viewers how bad the democratic opposition is. However, there is a part of the film, where its authors, who hide behind pseudonyms Aliaksandr Uiuhin, Hiaorhi Kozyrau Viktar Nikolski, Uladzimir Zhavaranak, Nadzeia Byvalaia, Ahafia Krasachka, and Siarhiei Usatau, directly insult the leader of the United Civil Party. In the documentary, an unidentified off-camera commentator said, «When Mr. Miller [Gazprom head Aleksey Miller] ordered the cutoff of gas supply to our republic at a 20-degree [subzero, Celsius] cold, wishing to force our leadership to sell him Beltransgaz for a song, pseudo-patriot Liabiedzka in fact came out in support of this move. Pouring mud on his country, slandering the president, he helped gentlemen like Svanidze [Nikolay Svanidze, host of the Zerkalo television show on

Russia`s Rossiya channel] to morally justify that act. It would be the worst nightmare to imagine the thug selling our national wealth to his friends oligarchs, if he were to grab power in Belarus by some miracle”, this is the conclusion made by the film authors. The film was shown by BT channel on 11 May, and repeated by ONT and STV. In his suit Anatol Liabiedzka demands to refute the information and to publicize the real names of the film authors. This is already the second session on the case. The first session took place on July 26 and finished seVieral minutes after the beginning. Representatives of ONT and STV channels did not come to court. Judge Aniskevich read out the official response of deputy chairperson of BT channel Aliaksandr Martynienka. He told the court the authors of the “Road to Nowhere” film are not on the channel staff and have not received honoraria. That’s why it’s impossible to find out their real names.

On ***16 August*** Aliaksei Shydlouski, one of coordinators of Zubr youth movement, was fined 95,000 BYR (USD 45). Savietski administrative commission made that decision on July 28. Shydlouski was detained on July 6 near Iakub Kolas Square in Minsk. He was distributing leaflets about the 21 July opposition rally dedicated to the 10th anniversary of Lukashenka’s presidency.

On ***16 August*** Iury Ziankovich, the acting chair of Minsk Regional Branch of the BPF Party, a deputy of the Minsk District Soviet, was invited to the Savietski Borough Board of Internal Affairs, where they made a report registering insubordination to the legal demands of the police officers after the 21 July action. Iury Ziankovich is due to appear on 17 August at 2.30 p.m. in Savietski BBIA and go from there to court. We would like to remind you that on 21 July the minivan driven by Iury Ziankovich was detained after the concert in Druzhby Narodau Park. The traffic police officer wanted to look inside the minivan because he thought that this car had brought the fly-sheets handed out at the action. Iury Ziankovich refused to allow the search, showing the inspector his deputy ID. The police officers thought it was faked-up and so took Mr. Ziankovich and his wife to Savietski BBIA.

On ***16 August*** minister of information Uladzimir Rusakievich signed the order to suspend the independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni, published by entrepreneur Ramuald Ulan. Mr. Ulan is accused of violating Art 10 and Art 12 of the Law on Press and Other Mass Media. One day later, August 17, the publisher got an official warning for the same “violations”. The founder of the newspaper stated that the suspension of ‘Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni’ is groundless. He also considers explanations of the Ministry contradictory. In particular, his newspaper has always been published by a private entrepreneur, and not by a legal entity. He refers to the Memo about the

Procedure to Register Periodicals, issued by the Ministry of Information. The Memo says that if a newspaper is founded by a citizen, then there is no need for an editorial board and a statute.

On ***16 August*** they continued the term of keeping Valiery Lieva-nieuski in the investigative ward. On 15 August at 9.20 p.m. the term of his arrest was to be over, the relations did not know he would not be released so they came to meet him outside the prison. However, the on-duty officer said that Mr. Lievanieuski would stay in the investigative ward. The term in the investigative ward for Valiery Lievanieuski was prolonged by Leninski Borough Court, that is to hear the case of public insult of President Lukashenka.

On ***17 August*** Uladzimir Matsiushenka, a member of the businessman Alieh Tychyna's initiative group, was distributed to work in Liepiel after graduating from the Pedagogical University. However, when Mr. Matsiushenka came to Liepiel Local Education Authority to get a job in school, the agency head Nikitsin said: «After you got yourself into the initiative group, no school principle is going to employ you». Thus, the young graduate was denied getting a state-provided job, which is against the effective legislation that makes the government provide employment to young graduates.

On ***17 August*** Piershamaiski Borough Court of Minsk did not satisfy the suit by the United Civil Party leader Anatol Liabiedzka who requested that his honor, dignity and business reputation be protected. The suit was against the TV companies BT, ONT and STV, and against the authors of the film «Road nowhere» shown by these companies. The ruling by Piershamaiski Borough Court that refused to grant the suit will be appealed in Minsk City Court.

On ***18 August*** Iury Ziankovich, a Minsk District Soviet deputy representing the BPF Party, was fined 5 basic units by Judge Natallia Skuharova. Iury Ziankovich now intends to file a supervisory complaint with Minsk City Court, and an application requesting institution of criminal proceedings against Judge Skuharava for passing an obviously biased ruling.

On ***18 August*** procurator of Malaryta District filed an appeal against the ruling by Malaryta District Court that granted the BPF Party suit for protecting honor, dignity and business reputation. Procurator for Malaryta District Litskievich argues in the appeal that «the court ruling has to be reversed because it is ungrounded and the court failed to take account of all facts constituting the evidence. Defendant Strok did not recognize the suit demands and pointed out that he had compared the activity of the Belarusian nationalists during World War II and the activity of the BPF Party. Because of the above

mentioned facts, the court should specify the activity (!) performed by the mentioned political parties and whether mentioning of this activity degrades the business reputation of the BPF Party. In view of the above the court has to expand the circle of witnesses with a view to specifying the contents of the defendant's speech».

On ***19 August*** Court of Biaroza started trying Aliaksandr Shaviel, a lawyer of the Human Rights Center Viasna. On 18 August Aliaksandr Shaviel took part in the civil proceedings, during which he sounded criticism of the Procurator following which he was accused of disrespect for the court. From the courtroom A.Shaviel was taken to the BBIA, where they made a report registering his alleged violation. During the hearing of the administrative case, Aliaksandr Shaviel requested a lawyer. He was offered three on-duty ones («available ones»). Shaviel refused from their services, so the hearing of the case was put off till 23 August. Aliaksandr Haliyeu, a lawyer of Minsk City Collegium of Lawyers, will appear for Shaviel in court.

On ***20 August*** Homiel regional court Judge Anatol Dudzich ruled to close down Homiel Women's Association Initsyatyva. He satisfied the liquidation suit filed by the regional Justice department. Initsyatyva became the 16th NGO in the region, closed down on the request of the justice department. The most frequent problem was NGO legal addresses registered at private homes of their leaders. Initsyatyva has also received warnings on that ground. NGO member, lawyer Dr. Iryna Kuchvalskaia represented the interests of the organization in court. She believes that legal addresses are an artificially created obstacle. Most NGOs are not able to overcome it. The majority of office buildings belong to the state. There is no defined procedure of renting them to non-governmental organizations. At the same time, the resources of NGOs are insufficient for renting an office. Thus, the authorities are using the factor of legal ad¬dres¬ses as a weapon against active NGOs.

On ***20 August*** Siarhiei Antonchyk, a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the 12th Convocation, met with the public activists of Svietlahorsk to discuss issues relating to the parliamentary election campaign. Two police officers (Aliaksandr Haroshkau and Siarhiei Razhkou) and an unidentified man in plain clothes equipped with a video camera appeared in the room where the meeting was taking place. The purpose of the visit was «checking the ID». All of those present in the meeting had a passport on them, with the exception of Vadzim Bolbas, who was taken to a police station for «ID identification procedure». However, as the police officers accompanying V.Bolbas went past the house where he lives, he suggested that he could pick up his passport from home, thus resolving the «identity» issue. During the ID checkup, all of the meeting participants were

filmed. The meeting participants believe that they had been following Siarhiei Antonchyk from Minsk, because nothing like that had earlier occurred in Svietlahorsk.

On ***21 August*** the event, organized by Andrei Klimau in Minsk, finished with arrest and seizure of his books. The former businessman and parliament member of 12th convocation gathered his supporters in Zhuravinka restaurant. The purpose of the event was to announce the idea of his participation in the presidential race – 2006, and to present Klimau's new book "Strolls with Vampire". Late in the evening the police stopped the car with Andrei Klimau and his wife Tatsiana. The police officers took away the documents from the car owner Lieanid Malakhau and seized about 200 copies of "Strolls with Vampire" and "Obvious Truths" books from the trunk. Andrei Klimau was kept in Tsentralny police station for 3 hours.

On ***23 August*** A number of large shops in Minsk refused to sell the leading independent periodicals, such as Belorusskiy Rynok, Belorus-skaya Delovaya Gazeta (BDG), Belorusskaya Gazeta and Narodnaia Volia. The shops that refused to put the non-state press on sale are Preston-market, and the Natsionalny department store. According to the chief executive of the Belorusskaya gazeta Viktar Bandarenka, though the editorial office has contracts with all of the shops, the administration of the shops have cancelled them unilaterally without notifying them in advance. V. Bandarenka says that they do not even keep it secret that they received an order from Minsk City Executive Committee.

On ***23 August*** the Supreme Court rejected the suit of the European Humanities University against the Ministry of Education. In the suit EHU protested against revocation of license for educational activity. EHU leadership plans to file another suit with the Supreme Court. This time they are going to sue the Chief economic board of the President's Staff that had illegally abrogated the lease contract. EHU was forced to leave the building, and that was the reason for the Education Ministry to revoke the license.

On ***23 August*** in Barysau strangers robbed the office of Zmitsier Barodka, one of democratic parliamentary candidates. Strangers broke the office doors open, and stole a computer, a printer, and a fax machine. Police investigate the burglary..

On ***23 August*** Biaroza District Court heard an administrative case against the lawyer Aliaksandr Shaviel, who had allegedly insulted the District Procurator Kurylovich. The court passed a ruling – a fine of 2 basic units.

On ***23 August*** the Supreme Court started hearing the case by the Soym of the BPF Party against the Ministry of Justice of Belarus. The suit authors request that the court cancel the Ministry of Justice warning issued on 1 July because representatives of the

Five+ coalition called in the Narodnaia Volia on people to take part in the unauthorized action of solidarity with the newspaper Narodnaia Volia «A Chain of Concerned Readers». The BPF Party leaders Uladzimir Labkovich and Iury Chavusau argued in court that the arguments presented by the Ministry of Justice are ungrounded. The BPF Party, as a legal entity, did not take a decision to enter the Five+ Coalition or to take part in the action.

On ***24 August*** the office of the Homiel Regional Public Association Civil Initiatives, which was deprived of official registration in 2003, was searched by the employees of the Regional Taxation Agency and of the Financial Investigation Department of the State Control Committee of Homiel Region. The visitors came to find out what the building housed. Civil Initiatives has been resident in the building earlier occupied by a shop for many years now, but for some reason the owner of the building has not taken down the shop sign. The employees of the Civil Initiatives, wishing not to mislead potential buyers, have posted a notice saying «No shop here». Nonetheless, Uladzimir Katsora does not think that this visit is a mere accident or a case of curiosity. He believes that it can be attributed to Viktar Karnienka, Organization Chair, planning to run for the Chamber of Representatives, competing against top-level officials in the electoral district.

On ***25 August*** the Supreme Court of Belarus left in force the war¬ning that was issued to Belarusian People's Front Party by the Ministry of Justice. The representative of the Ministry Neanila Fishkina built the accusation on the press publications about the establishment of the unregistered coalition "5+" and seVieral interviews of the head of the BPF Party Vintsuk Viachorka where he spoke on behalf of the coalition.

On ***25 August*** UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions was denied meeting with the prisoner of conscience Mikhail Marynich. The meeting was planned on 25 August, but the Group's request was not granted.

On ***25 August*** Reporters without Borders condemned the new attacks on the independent press ahead of the elections. Reporters protested after the information minister ordered a three-month closure of the independent weekly Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni in Smarhon, western Belarus. They are also concerned that some shops in Minsk had refused to sell independent periodicals. «It is unacceptable for the independent media to be silenced on the eve of elections that are of major importance to the country» said Reporters Without Borders in a letter to information minister, Uladzimir Rusakievich. »Everything points to the fact that Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni is a victim of official abuse. We call on you to reconsider your decision to suspend this newspaper and to abstain from similar steps against other media «, the international press freedom organization added.

On ***26 August*** Head of the Supreme Court of Belarus refused to issue protest against the non-registration of the public association Civil Alternative, established by 209 members of the liquidated Civil Initiatives. Bearing in mind that the process of registration could be quite complicated, the founders of the organization composed the organization statute following the example of the statute of Belarusian Republican Youth Union. However, the justice board of Homiel Regional Executive Committee stated that 7 paragraphs of the statute violated the legislation and refused to register the organization. Appellations to the original BRYU statute were fruitless. The association took the case to Homiel Region Court and lost it there. However, the situation became a bit clearer with the answer of the prosecutor of General Prosecutor's Office Ivan Branchel, who stated that statutes of registered associations could contain violations of the acting legislation. According to Uladzimir Katsora, members of the organization intend to complain to the UNO against such outrageous violation of the right of association from the side of the authorities.

On ***26 August*** the head of the investigative department of Minsk and Minsk region KGB Nikanovich informed the public about extension of Marynich's detention term for at least one month. According to lawyer Viera Stramkouskaia, Marynich is facing another criminal charge under Art 210 part 4 of the Criminal Code. The suspicion now is that Mr. Marynich stole equipment from the organization "Business Initiative" which he chairs. Marynich may receive 8-15 years in jail in case he is found guilty.

On ***26 August*** the Supreme Court of Belarus left in force the warning that was issued to United Civil Party by the Ministry of Justice in July 2004 for urges to take part in the action of solidarity with the "Narodnaia Volia" newspaper "Chain of Concerned Readers" that were published by the newspaper on the behalf of the party as a member of the People's coalition "5+". The UCP lawyers are of the opinion that the warning is plainly groundless.

On ***26 August*** Hary Pahaniaila, deputy chair of Belarusian Helsinki Committee, visited Rechytsa at the invitation of a leader of PA Pers-pektive and a potential candidate for the Chamber of Representa¬tives, where he discussed the problems the potential candidate's initiative group had. The group members complained about the District Executive Committee creating obstacles. In particular, the Executive Committee governing staff are away from their workplaces during the office hours, which creates problems with certifying the signatures of the initiative group members on signature lists. Lieanid Nievar and Hary Pahaniaila visited the District Election Committee chair and the deputy chair of the District Executive Committee Vital Atamanchuk, and pointed out the problems to him. In particular, that legislation bans combining the positions of the

executive committee deputy chair and the district election committee chair. While performing the duties of the election commission chair, V.Atamanchuk should take a leave of absence in his main work¬place. Also, seVieral other executive committee employees work on the commission. When Lieanid Nievar and Hary Pahaniaila came back to Nievar's home, where the initiative group members had gathered, police officers in flak jackets and with sub-machine guns burst into the courtyard, led by Lieutenant Colonel Paviel Ryzhko, Deputy Head of the District BIA. The police officers refused to identify themselves to Lieanid Nievar and name the purpose of their visit. After Nievar introduced Hary Pahaniaila as his lawyer, the police officers started negotiations and showed their ID documents and documents legalizing their actions. It turned out that after getting «information about theft in the house» Lieutenant Colonel Ryzhko issued an order requiring the search of the house, which was sanctioned by Inter-District Procurator Budkou. The search was performed by Police Captain Hrytsok together with Lieutenant Maliutsin, Lieutenant Kapusniak filming the procedures performed. The police officers searched the structures in the courtyard, all the rooms in the house, checked all the bags, cases and pockets of those present there for arms or other illegal items. All of the members of the initiative group went through this degrading procedure, including BHC Deputy Chair Hary Pahaniaila and Chair of PA Perspektive Anatol Shumchanka. Many of those present in the courtyard were made to provide written notes explaining why they were there, who had asked them to come there, what they do, etc. Nievar's neighbors and other Minsk residents watched the police actions for three hours. Having completed the search and the interrogation, the police officers indicated that no illegal items had been disclosed, so nothing would be confiscated. The police officers refused to register oral complaints about their actions, or leave a copy of the report registering the search procedures performed. Head of the BBIA gave a copy of the report after Nievar and Pahaniaila arrived at the BBIA. According to the information provided by Hary Pahaniaila, the search was superficial and formal, the searchers not looking for arms. Lieanid Nievar and Hary Pahaniaila filed a complaint about the illegal actions of the police with the Inter-District Procurator. BHC believes that what the police officers were actually doing was an «operation» aimed at threatening the initiative group members and discrediting the potential candidate for the Chamber of Representatives Lieanid Nievar.

On ***26 August*** Hrodna court started hearing of the criminal case based on Article 368 part 2 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus – publicly degrading President Lukashenka. There are two defendants: head of the businessmen's strike committee Valiery Lievanieuski and his deputy Aliaksandr Vasilieu. They are accused of distributing

fly-sheets with poems that allegedly contain insult on the President. Vasilieu is also accused of staging an unauthorized rally of businessmen on 1 May. Valiery Lievanieuski was taken to court by the police from the investigative ward, where he had been kept for about 4 months. Only relatives of Valiery Lievanieuski and seVieral journalists attended the hearing. Nonetheless, the security of the building of Leninski Borough Court was reinforced. The police put up metal barriers outside the entrance. The journalists were told that they would not be allowed inside unless they had written an application to the judge, though the process was open. Eventually, the police allowed the journalists inside, banning, however, cameras. As a result of the delay, the press representatives got inside the courtroom half an hour late. Valiery Lievanieuski was in a «cage». He was guarded by three armed police officers changed every half an hour. At the start, he petitioned that the court found Aliaksandr Lukashenka plaintiff to the criminal case so that he could attend the proceedings in court. Procurator Panasiuk said that the court does not need an application from the plaintiff Aliaksandr Lukashenka or his presence in the court, because he is the head of state and so embodies the state itself. Lievanieuski and Vasilieu did not plead guilty and requested that the court make it clear which part of the poem contained in the fly-sheet degraded Lukashenka, and accused him «of illegally using state funds». Those who attended the hearing could not understand which words were why Lievanieuski and Vasilieu were being brought to justice, either.

On ***27 August*** members of Zubr youth movement held an action in support of Mikhail Marynich and Valiery Lievanieuski. Wearing Free Marynich! T-shirts, a group of over 30 young people made a chain in front of the KGB building in Skaryna Avenue in Minsk. Then they made a circle and walked in front of the building with their hands on the back of the heads, which reminded of prisoners. The action lasted for about 20 minutes. No one was detained. On that day it was four months since the former minister and Ambassador Mikhail Marynich was arrested and kept in KGB prison. He is charged with illegal possession of weapons. The majority of experts, interviewed by the Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Research, are convinced of the criminal case being politically motivated.

On ***27 August*** the minister of information Uladzimir Rusakievich signed the order to suspend the issue of the “Navinki” newspaper for three months on charges of violation of seVieral articles of the law “On press and other mass media”. According to the ministry, the editorial board of the newspaper informed the ministry about change of its legal address too late. It didn’t send “signal” numbers to state bodies, didn’t present full issue data and committed some financial violations. The head of the registration department of the ministry Viktar Turetski stated that “Navinki” could receive even severer

punishments for the committed violations, whereas the senior editor of the newspaper Pauliuk Kana-valchyk believes that "new hunting of the newspaper by the authorities can be explained with their wish to exclude "Navinki" from the informational field and public life during holding of the Parliamentary election", says the press-release distributed by the newspaper. Last time the newspaper was suspended for three months beginning from 22 May 2003, by the previous information minister, Mikhail Padhainy. Before that, the newspaper was warned two times: first time – for distribution of information insulting to honor and dignity of President of the Republic of Belarus and the second – for "attempt on morality, honor and dignity of citizens". After this suspension the newspaper experienced problems with printing houses and finding of means to renew the issue, which was done only recently, added the Navinki press-release.

On ***27 August*** the Supreme Court of Belarus left in force the warning to Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada. Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada applied to the Supreme Court, asking to set aside the warning that was issued by the Ministry of Justice to BSDH and three more parties for urges to take part in the action of solidarity with the "Narodnaia Volia" newspaper, "Chain of Concerned Readers", on behalf of coalition "5+". These urges were published in "Narodnaia Volia". The head of the party Stanislau Shushkievich proved to the court that the coalition "5+" was a public movement that united members of different political and public organizations, who invited citizens to the action. Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada didn't invite people to the action, so the warning of the Ministry of Justice is lawless. Nevertheless, judge Filimanikhina didn't satisfy the BSDH complaint. Shushkievich com¬mented: "It's impossible to accuse the party, but you see what's going on: as far as the coalition is not a juridical body, so there's no organization to give warning to. Now, let's warn a political party. I think it's the best joke".

On ***27 August*** an event called Rock after Vacations was due to take place in the Blindazh Club, which was to present the I Love and Believe in My Lyceum album. That the concert would be cancelled became known seVieral hours before the event. According to Franak Viachorka, the manager of the project by the students of the Belarusian Humanitarian Lyceum, the culture department of Frunzenski Borough called the Blindazh Club and advised the concert be cancelled. The project manager said that more than 200 tickets to the concert had been sold out. The lyceum students were going to perform some songs from the lyceum disc, including the Belarusian versions of the world's classical and rock hits. The famous Belarusian rock groups ZET, Haradzkija, Tarpach, the group that won the Basovishcha-2004 festival, and others were going to take part in the

concert. According to Liavon Volski, leader of the ZET group, the musicians were going to perform free of charge in support of the lyceum closed down by the authorities.

On ***29 August*** the congress of the United Civil Party, which was to nominate candidates for Parliament, was almost disrupted due to the actions of the Minsk Hotel administration whose security did not let the delegates inside the conference-hall rented by the party. Because of this the UCP has prepared an appeal with the procurator's office requesting that criminal proceedings be initiated against the hotel administration. The general manager of the hotel calls this accident a case of misunderstanding and offers the UCP his apologies.

On ***30 August*** Zhlobin District Court started the trial on the administ-rative case against Uladzimir Katsora, the vice-head of Homiel regional organization of United Civil Party, vice-head of Homiel branch of the Republican public association "Legal Initiative", who is charged with activity on behalf of unregistered organization. Uladzimir Katsora described the circumstances: "I was on my way from Minsk to Homiel. I had the "Vremya" newspaper and the fly-sheets "Five Steps to Better Life" with me. Near the town of Zhlobin I noticed attention of the police. I was stopped by road police near the village of Lebiadziouka and told my car reminded of a stolen car and that I had to go to Zhlobin District Police Board. I was escorted there by the road policemen. Then workers of the DPB examined my car, attached the newspaper and the fly-sheets and composed a report for violation of article 167-10 of the Administrative Code of the Republic of Belarus (activity on behalf of unregistered organization). They considered People's coalition "5+" to be such an organization. They passed the report to Zhlobin District Court. On 30 August I proved to the court that the "Vremya" newspaper was registered, but the judge doubted whether United Civil Party was and told me to present to her a copy of its registration certificate".

On ***30 August*** Aliaksandr Vasilieu officially refused from his earlier testimony given in the KGB department. He said that he was pressurized to testify against himself and Valiery Lievanieuski.

On ***30 August*** it became known that the Department of Financial Investigations of the State Control Department did not drop criminal charges against Tatsiana Protska, Chair of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee, and Tatsiana Rudkievich, senior accountant of the organization. On 23 June the Economic Court of Minsk ruled that the human rights activists were not required to pay taxes from the TACIS grants, but, as became known to BHC, the criminal case based on this ruling was not closed.

On ***31 August*** Aliena Jarmolchyk, Judge of Zhlobin District Court, imposed a fine of 585 thousand rubles on Uladzimir Katsora, deputy chair of Homiel Regional Branch of the United Civil Party. The fine was imposed for transporting in the privately-owned car 15 thousand fly-sheets «Five Steps Toward Better Life» and more than 1000 copies of the Vremya newspaper from Minsk to Homiel. The judge estimated the transportation as activity on behalf of an unregistered organization. Judge Jarmolchyk ruled that 15 thousand fly-sheets «Five Steps Toward Better Life» be destroyed. As regards the Vremya newspaper, the police should conduct additional checkup to highlight the origins of the periodical. The court passed the fine ruling after it had received from the Ministry of Justice information that no organization named Five+ existed.

On ***31 August*** representatives of the Gypsy national minority appealed to the Ministry of Education, requesting that a gypsy school be opened in Minsk. As of now, the Republic of Belarus has about 70 thousand gypsies living on its territory, but not a single school or a form in a school, where subjects are taught in the gypsy language. Traditionally, the gypsies speak their language in the family, so a child starting school simply does not understand what the teachers are saying to him, which adversely affects their academic achievements in the future. 92% of the gypsies in Belarus do not have a complete secondary education, and have big problems with getting university education. The Ministry did not respond to the appeal by the national minority representatives, the applicants not getting any kind of response.

On ***31 August*** Uladzimir Zviernik, a member of the United Civil Party was familiarized with an order that cancelled his employment contract. Mr. Zviernik worked as a trainer in the Sport School for Children and Young Adults in the village of Chysts. Zviernik was dismissed after he had declared his intention to run in elections in the capacity of a candidate.

SEPTEMBER

On ***1 September*** In the town of Sharkoushchyna the police detained the citizen of the town of Miyory, member of the United Civil Party Valiery Karaliou who distributed the newspapers “Zgoda”, “Novy Chas”, “Tut I Tsiaper” and the fly-sheets of the pre-electoral coalition “5+”. The head of Vitsiebsk regional UCP organization Hienadz Ananieu was detained at the market of the town of Vorsha where he distributed to vendors and customers the “Vremya” newspaper. Mr. Ananieu, who is the editor of the newspaper, had to prove to the police that “Vremya” is officially registered and that its distribution wasn’t connected with his participation in the Parliamentary election and wasn’t prohibited pre-electoral agitation. Vorsha police detained Hienadz Ananieu in the police point for about an hour. Valiery Karaliou was detained for two hours. During that time the police phoned somebody and asked what to do with the detainee. Finally they let him go.

On ***1 September*** the BPF Party filed a complaint with the Chair of Minsk City Court against the ruling by Piershamaiski Borough Court of Minsk. Thus, the party continues with its attempts to bring to justice Iury Prakopau and Belarusian TV and Radio Company for degrading the business reputation of the party.

On ***1 September*** At 4 p.m. in Kastrychnitskaia Square there took place the youth action in support of Belarusian language. About 100 persons took part in it. Mainly there were pupils of the closed Belarusian Humanitiesn Lyceum and activists of youth organizations, such as Zubr. When action participants tried to unroll their posters, the police started detentions. The head of the lyceum self-government Franak Viachorka (son of the BPF head Vintsuk Viachorka) was beaten and detained. The surname of one of the policemen who detained Viachorka is Lipninski. When Viasna lawyer Valiantsin Stefanovich tried to defend Franak, he was detained as well. He said that Jauhien Afnahiel was also been in the police car. The police confiscated posters from the action participants, after which the latter ones went to Janka Kupala Square. On the way the police also detained the lyceum teacher Liavon Barshcheuski.

On ***2 September*** Aliaksei Lukashevich, a lawyer of the inter-regional unregistered human rights organization «Viasna Paazeryia» was fined 3 basic units. The fine was imposed by the administrative commission of Navapolatsk Town Executive Committee because Lukashevich together with the other activists of the Popular Coalition Five+ staged in Navapolatsk a public voting about the third presidential term (the result: 84.17% of the questioned were against the third term). Zmitsier Salauiou, head of the Viasna Paazeyria organization filed a complaint with court against the ruling of the above

mentioned admi¬nistrative commission of Navapolatsk Town Executive Committee, which imposed a fine of 5 basic units on Mr. Salauiou for distributing fly-sheets against the third presidential term.

On ***2 September*** Vintsuk Viachorka filed a complaint with the Pro-curator's Office of Tsentralny Borough for the illegal actions of the police officers who had detained and beaten his under-age son Franak during the 1 September action «We want to study in Belarusian!». The complaint reads as follows: "On September 1, 2004 my son Frantsishak Viachorka, born in 1988, was detained at the exit of Kastrychnitskaia subway station near the Palace of Trade Unions at about 4.05 p.m. by AMAP (riot squad) officers in civil clothes and taken to Minsk Tsentralny borough Board of Internal Affairs. While detaining my son, the police officers failed to introduce themselves and to explain the reasons for their actions. My son learned that he had been detained by police officers only after they arrived to Tsentralny borough Board of Internal Affairs. In the process of detention strangers in civil clothes used brute physical force against the minor, namely, they twisted his arms, hit him in the legs, and beat him while dragging to the bus. The bus had no identification of relation to the bodies of internal affairs. In the bus they continued to beat my son who was lying on the bus floor. During the detention my son's pants and shirt were damaged, further usage of the clothes is impossible. Valiantsin K. Stefanovich and Jauhien I. Af¬nahiel were also dragged to the bus. When the detained were conveyed to Minsk Tsentralny borough Board of Internal Affairs, the police officers did not draw up any reports and, having kept them for no more than 2 hours, released the detained. During the detention my son found out the last name of one of the policemen who detained him: Lipinski, member of the 8th platoon of riot squad police of Minsk city Board of Internal Affairs. Another riot squad member in red T-shirt, who participated in the detention, was called by a nickname Marazilnik (Freezer) by his colleagues. On the street and in the bus the persons who detained the minor used foul language and intimidated him. The police officers insulted and degraded my son. I should point out that my son was never given the reasons for detention. Also, the police officers did not draw up a report of the administrative detention thus violating Article 240 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Belarus. In violation of Article 240 of the Code of Administr-ative Offences neither I nor my wife were informed about our son's location. I consider the actions of police officers towards my son unlaw-ful, exceeding the official power of police officers and violating the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Police", the norms of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Belarus, and the legal rights of a child. The police officers had no legal grounds for usage of the physical force described in Article 19 of the Law "About Police". The personal belongings

of my son were seized illegally, without record of seizure. He did not resist and did not counteract.. In view of the aforesaid, guided by Article 6 of the Law "On Police", and the Law "On Office of a Public Procurator", I request: 1. to carry out the prosecutor's check of the mentioned facts; 2. to bring the guilty persons to account as provided by law. 3. in the process of the check to interrogate the witnesses of my son's illegal detention: Valiantsin K. Stefanovich and Iauhien I. Afnahiel".

On ***3 September*** judge Natallia Vajtsiakhovich declined the complaint against the illegal custody of Mikhail Marynich. By this complaint Viera Stramkouskaia tried to get Marynich released. She referred to absence of active investigation and said it was quite doubtful he would escape in the case the restraint was changed. The judge agreed with the ruling of prosecutor's office, according to which Marynich will be kept in the investigative ward of KGB till at least 26 September. According to Stramkouskaia, the state of Marynich's health has deteriorated: Marynich often regularly complains about heartache. Viera Stramkouskaia filed a complaint with the city court of Minsk.

On ***3 September*** it became known that the Ministry of Justice again refused to register the Party of Freedom and Progress. The head of the party, deputy of the Chamber of Representatives Uladzimir Navasiad said that last time the ministry motivated its decision by "violation of the order of the party establishment". He emphasized that this time that party submitted additional documentation to the ministry. This time the formal reason was invalidity of signatures. According to Navasiad, the conclusion of the ministry states that all 1 000 signatures were checked by the institute of criminology and legal expertise..

On ***3 September*** Head of the department of registration and control of the observance of the law on press of the Ministry of Justice Viktar Huretski confirmed to Belarusian Association of Journalists the infor-mation that the newspapers Vremya, Predprinimatelskaya Gazeta and seVieral other independent newspapers were suspended for three months. The ministry explains these actions with its wish to establish order among press. According to Mr. Huretski the order to suspend "Vremya" was signed on 24 August. The edition is charged with violation of articles 10 and 26 of the law "On press and other mass media". Pretensions of the ministry concern the legal address of the editorial board of the newspaper which was allegedly incorrectly printed in the newspaper and was absent in the application for registration of the newspaper. In its turn, the editorial board states it still hasn't received the official note about the suspension. Predprinimatelskaya Gazeta which renewed its activity in spring after a long break was suspended on 20 August. The newspaper was charged with having changed its topics ("from productive and legal" to "mass and political") and the periodicity of its issue

without informing the ministry about it. We should remind that on 19 June 2003 the newspaper was suspended on charge of distribution of false information, when it provided its pages to journalists of the Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta that was suspended at that time.

On ***4 September*** the editorial office of the Vremya received a notifi-cation mailed by the Ministry of Information, which said that the news-paper was suspended from 24 August. The editorial office argues that the violations quoted in the order issued by Minister Rusakievich did not occur through the newspaper's fault, and so is going to protest the actions by the Ministry of Information. The order says that from 1 August 2004 the rental agreement concluded between AAT Belremstroy¬sviaz and the privately-owned company Publishing House Vremya that acts as the newspaper's editorial office. The warning and the subsequent suspension of the periodical were caused by the editorial office releasing 2 issues (dated 12 and 19 August) with the wrong address indicated, which is a violation of Article 10 and 26 of the Law on the Press. Accor-ding to the deputy head of the publishing house Vremya A. Tsynkievich, the editorial office was completely unaware of the rental agreement cancellation: the letter in which AAT Belremstroysviaz notified the lessee of the cancellation was sent only on 19 August, which is confirmed by all mail documents. On the same day the publishing house concluded a new rental agreement and indicated the new address in the new number of the newspaper. «The newspaper did not violate anything», says A.Tsynkievich. «The Ministry had no legal reasons for suspending the periodical». He believes that the actions by the Ministry of Information are connected to the upcoming parliamentary elections and, possibly, to the conduct of «some other political events» in the country.

On ***6 September*** Procurator Eduard Panasiuk demanded that the Chair of the Nation-Wide Strike Committee of Businessmen Valiery Lievanieuski be sentenced to three years in common security prison for undermining the dignity of the President of the Republic of Belarus. And the deputy Chair of the businessmen's strike committee Aliaksandr Vasilieu be sentenced to three years in common security prison for staging an unauthorized procession and rally in Hrodna on 1 May. Because a more severe penalty covers a less severe one, the Procurator demanded A.Vasilieu be sentenced to three years in prison.

On ***6 September*** seVieral dozens of Krishna believers gathered in the cafeteria of the "Amkador" factory in Hikala Street for traditional celebration. They wanted to hand out traditional gifts to passers by. Policemen from Savietski Borough Department of Internal Affairs dispersed them. There were also persons in plain clothes who refused to show

their documents. The Hindus obeyed to the police who threatened to detain them due to absence of official permission for the assembly. Now they intend to sue the police.

On ***6 September*** it became known that the Belarusian branch of the US Public Union of Committees for Protection of former Soviet Jews (UCSJ) is going to appeal in court against the Belarusian Foreign Ministry's refusal to prolong the registration term. According to the branch's lawyer Artur Liushyts, the preliminary registration term is over on 14 August, and the Foreign Ministry refused to prolong it. He says that the branch has done a lot for the past three years: «Together with the Belarusian and foreign historians, the Branch issued two books «Belarus in the 20th century», co-organized scholarly conferences, investigation into the history of Belarusian Jews, and honoring the victims to Holocaust».

On ***7 September*** the head of the republican strike committee of entrepreneurs Valiery Lievanieuski and his assistant Aliaksandr Vasilieu were sentenced to two years in jail for insult to president Aliaksandr Lukashenka, accompanied by charges of felony (part 2 of article 368 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus "Public insult to president of the Republic of Belarus"). Aliaksandr Vasilieu was also judged for the organization of the protest action of entrepreneurs on 1 May. The court also ruled to confiscate the computers that had been taken away from Lievanieuski and Vasilieu in favor of the state and exact from them 643 2 rubles (about $300) of the court expenses.

On ***7 September*** the Supreme Court upheld the warning issued by the Ministry of Justice to the Belarusian Party of Communists.The court sided with the Ministry officials who had concluded that the party is taking part in the unregistered coalition Five+, and has called on people to take part in the unauthorized picket of solidarity with the newspaper Narodnaia Volia. The party leadership attempted to prove the warning ungrounded because the Belarusian Party of Communists had not taken a decision to enter the coalition, or take part in the action. The Supreme Court dismissed these arguments as irrelevant. The BPC leader Siarhiei Kaliakin argues that this is the first stage of an offensive launched against opposition political parties: «I understand why they have done this. The next step would be an attack on the parties, banning the parties for having established a coalition illegal in the opinion of the court».

On ***7 September*** at 9 p.m. on 7 September all four Belarusian TV-channels – BT, Lad, ONT and STV broadcast the appeal of the president to the citizens of Belarus, in which he declared a referendum, in which he put the question of his fate – whether people will allow him to run for presidency for the third time (athwart the Constitution). We should remind that article 82 of the Belarusian Constitutions states: "President is elected for five

years… One person can be president for not more than two terms". Aliaksandr Lukashenka has been elected president of Belarus twice – in 1994 and 2001. Aliaksandr Lukashenka appointed the referen-dum on 17 October and combined with the election. The question put to the referendum is formulated in the following way: "Do you allow the first president of the Republic of Belarus Aliaksandr Ryhoravich Lukashenka to participate in the presidential election in the capacity of candidate and do you accept the first part of article 81 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus in the following edition: "President is elected for five years directly by the people on the basis of common, free, equal and direct electoral right by secret vote?".

On ***7 September*** an official meeting of solidarity with victims of the terrorist attack in Beslan was to be held. Pupils of seVieral schools were taken to Kastrychnitskaia Square together with their teachers and activists of Belarusian Republican Youth Union. At 9 p.m. the appeal of president Lukashenka concerning declaration the referendum for giving him the possibility to run for third presidency was broadcast to the action participants at the large monitor that stands in the square. After the end of the broadcast two dozens of youngsters started to shout "Shame!". Policemen in plain clothes ran towards them. They detained the activist of "Young Front" Dzmitry Dashkievich, carried him to their bus and took to Minsk Tsentralny Borough Board of Internal Affairs.

On ***7 September*** it became known that Siarhiei Savich, the Young Front activist from Zhodzina, who took part in the election campaign was expelled from the Academy of Internal Affairs. The Academy administration believes that academic and political activities are incompatible. Last year Siarhiei Savich, who studied in the law faculty, took part in the action of protest against the deployment of a Russian radar station near Hantsavichy. Now he is involved with the election campaign. Siarhiei Savich spent two years studying in the Police Academy. He had planned to become a deputy of Zhodzina Town Soviet, and help Paviel Krasouski, the Young Front branch leader, become elected to the Chamber of Representatives.

On ***8 September*** the International Helsinki Federation of Human Rights condemned the sentence to Valiery Lievanieuski and Aliaksandr Vasilieu. Aaron Rhodes, executive director of the federation, called the trial in Hrodna politically motivated. International Helsinki Federation pointed out that Belarusian authorities violate the right to establish an opposition party and organize a strike committee.

On ***8 September*** Minsk Tsentralny Borough Court sentenced the activist of "Young Front" Dzmitry Dashkievich to 10 days in jail for participation in the meeting of 7

September in Kastrychnitskaia Square of Minsk. He was detained at the meeting and had to spend night in the detention center in Akrestsin Street.

On ***8 September*** at about 8 p.m. Zhodzina police detained a high school student with leaflets against the third presidential term for Lukashenka. Zhodzina Procurator V. Litvinienka decided that Young Front member Jauhien Valkaviets had violated Art 45 part 8 of the Election Code because the leaflets had no publisher's imprint. Valkaviets was charged with violation of Art 163-3 of the Code of Administrative Offences (violation of the election legislation). The case materials were sent to court.

On ***8 September***, International day of solidarity of journalists, repre-sentatives of Russian "First channel" gave prizes of Dzmitry Zavadski "For courage and professionalism" to their Belarusian colleague. This year the prize holders were Maryna Koktysh (BelaPAN news agency, headed by Alies Lipai), Lieanid Mindlin and Iryna Khalip.

On ***8 September*** the human rights activist Valiery Shchukin was beaten in Minsk. Yesterday night two men attacked him, giving seVieral blows on the head. None of the personal belongings were stolen. Valiery Shchukin himself attributes the attack to his speeches against the referendum for a third term for President Aliaksandr Lukashenka.

On ***9 September*** eight people were detained for distributing the Zubr newspaper: the Zubr movement coordinator Aliaksei Shydlouski, the press-secretary Aliaksandr Atroshchankau, the movement activists Nadzeya Khaladzinskaya, Maryna Liebiedzieva, Maksim Hromau, Daryia Maldavanava and Aliaksandr Ushko. With respect to all of the detained the police drew up reports by terms of Article 172 CAO (distribution of printed materials without the imprint).

On ***9 September*** One of fractions of European Parliament nominated Belarusian opposition youth movement Zubr for Sakharov prize which is awarded by the Parliament every year to human rights activists of the world. Konrad Szymanski, deputy of the fraction "Union for Europe of Nations" thusly explained this nomination: "I think that violations of human and political rights in Belarus, near the border of European Union, are to be among our priorities. This is the main reason to nominate Zubr for this prize. The second reason is to generally draw the attention of European politicians to the events in Belarus. Pitifully enough, often European politicians look far away and don't see that we have problems and regarding our closest neighbors».

On ***9 September*** during the second regional meeting of NGO's of Central Asia and Europe "Civil Bridges" that was held in Issyk-Kul the head of Human Rights Center Viasna Alies Bialiatski and its lawyer Valiantsin Stefanovich had a short meeting with the former

president of Russia Boris Yeltsin. When asked about his attitude to the referendum declared by Lukashenka and the possibility for him to take part in presidential election for the third time, Yeltsin answered: "It's negative. It's unworthy for a real politician to change the Constitution in his favor".

On ***10 September*** the leader of the nation-wide strike committee of businessmen Valiery Lievanieuski went on hunger-strike in the investigative ward of Hrodna because he had been transferred to another cell with much worse conditions that the one he had been kept in before.

On ***10 September*** the US Embassy expressed great concern over the recent trial and sentence to Aliaksandr Vasilieu and Valiery Lieva-nieuski. Both the «offences», which are the printing of a poem, and the «punishment», two years of correctional labor, look like major manipulation of the Belarusian justice aimed at suppressing the freedom of speech of the Belarusian citizens. The ambassador is also concerned about the judge's refusal to let the defense witnesses have their say in the proceedings. Not trial can be called fair, if the defense is not permitted to produce their evidence, with only one point of view allowed. The actions of the Belarusian court authorities against these two political activists look politically-motivated and raise serious doubts regarding the intention of the Belarusian authorities to allow an open political process in the run-up to the parliamentary elections in Belarus.

On ***10 September*** the authoritative human rights group Amnesty International condemned the verdict passed on 7 September to the chair of the nation-wide strike committee of the businessmen Valiery Lievanieuski and his deputy Aliaksandr Vasilieu. Amnesty International declared these people to be prisoners of conscience.

On ***10 September*** it became known that the assessment visit of October OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Miklos Haraszti was planning to make to Belarus may well be canceled. Mr. Haraszti planned to examine the media situation in Belarus and make an appropriate report. At the beginning of July the OSCE media expert informed both Belarusian foreign minister and OSCE official repre¬sentative in Belarus Viktar Haisionak of his plans to visit Belarus. Throug¬hout July and August Mr. Haraszti was successfully discussing the details of the visit with the officials in charge. He agreed to change the dates and the term of his trip, as well as the program of the media seminar, as Belarusian authorities required. After all, the seminar itself was cancelled.. Nonetheless, Mr. Haraszti was still planning to visit Belarus. To receive an entrance visa, the OSCE representative should first get permission from the official Minsk. However, he did not get any response. We should remind that in 2003 a similar thing happened to the

former OSCE representative on the Freedom of Media Freimut Duve – Bela¬rusian authorities didn't give permission for his visit either. "Interpreting diplomatic language, lack of answer means a refusal. The fact that the whole year OSCE representatives on media freedom have not been able to enter Belarus can signify that our freedom of speech situation is really a crisis one," – states BAJ chairman Zhana Litvina.

On ***11 September*** the officers of the local KGB department and of the police disrupted the seminar of young social democrats, which was devoted to the referendum and the parliamentary elections. The special service agents searched the seminar participants in the conference hall of the Kastrychnitski Hotel, where the seminar was held. The KGB agents showed a particular interest in the seminar guest, the young Swedish social democrat Alben Dalen. He was taken to a separate room, where he was filmed.

On ***13 September*** the leader of the Barysau youth center Volar Dzmitry Barodka was forced to quit his job as the trade representative of the confectionery company Ivkon. The company management forced Dzmitry to tender resignation saying that after their employee declared his intention to run for Parliament, the company management had come under a lost of pressure from the official authorities.

On ***13 September*** Polish Sejm condemned human rights violations in Belarus. Polish Sejm with anxiety watches the recent events in Belarus that witness human rights violations and limitation of rights of Belarusian citizens, — is said in the statement of Polish Sejm. Polish Parliamenta¬rians filled this document with concrete examples, such as liquidation of Belarusian Labor Party and European Humanities University. It is said in the statement that during the times of communistic rule support of the West was very important for Polish democratic forces and therefore the latter ones express their solidarity with those Belarusians who fight for freedom and democracy in their country.

On ***13 September*** Zinaida Hanchar, wife of the missing politician Viktar Hanchar, filed to the administration of three Belarusian TV channels – National State TV and Radio Company of the Republic of Belarus, close corporation "Second National TV Channel" and close corporation "Capital TV" the requests to give her possibility to speak in the TV channels on 16 September, the fifth anniversary of the kidnap of her husband. Now Zinaida Hanchar expects an answer from the duty officials of the TV channels, who are obliged to answer by the law "On applications of citizens".

On ***13 September*** the Republican Public Association Belarusian Language Association named after Frantsysk Skaryna sent letters to the authorities regarding the act of vandalism to the tombstone of the Popular Poet of Belarus Iakub Kolas, who is

buried in the Military Cemetery in Minsk. Black inscriptions in gothic font had been made on the monument.

On ***14 September*** Criminal police of Minsk Tsentralny Borough Board of Internal Affairs stopped the coordinators of the unregistered youth movement Zubr Aliaksiei Liaukovich and Mikita Sasim outdoors and searched them. In their bags they found seVieral copies of the Zubr newspaper. Despite the fact that the fellows didn't distribute the newspaper, the police drew reports for activity on behalf of unregistered organization. Court fined Aliaksiei Liaukovich 30 basic units.

On ***14 September*** Salihorsk Town Court fined Iauhien Valadzko, Siarhiei Adadurau and Viachaslau Sinharau for participation in una-uthorized action against the referendum opposite the building of Salihorsk Town Executive Committee. Judge Tatsiana Lapanik didn't satisfy the petition and fined all of us. She said that yesterday's action was found illegal and therefore its participants were fined 20 basic units each.

On ***14 September*** Representatives of the Assembly of democratic public associations presented in Minsk the book "Witnesses of Persecution of Belarusian NGOs" with information about facts of persecution of NGOs by the authorities and surnames of the officials who had relation to it. For 2003-2004 Belarusian courts of different instances liquidated 56 NGOs on the request of the Ministry of Justice. 78 organizations had to conduct self-liquidation as a result of pres-surization. Representatives of the Assembly decided to collect in one book all facts and reasons for liquidation of NGOs and also publish new documents that witnessed the real reasons for liquidation and non-registration of public organizations. Besides, the book contains a part of office correspondence of the justice minister Viktar Halavanau with the vice-head of the presidential administration Alieh Praliaskouski who heads the commission on registration of public associations. The minister enumerates the organizations that were to be registered (mainly sportive ones) and that were not to be registered (mainly those that were founded by opposition-minded public activists). Mr. Halavanau also wrote that some organizations (such as Association of businessmen of Mahiliou region) were to be registered because they were supported by the head of Mahiliou Regional Executive Committee Barys Batura.

On ***15 September*** the authorities again try to deprive pupils of the liquidated Iakub Kolas National Humanitarian Lyceum of premises. The police together with the head of residential maintenance company No. 5 paid a visit to the flat in Frantsysk Skaryna Avenue, rented by Viktar Savitski, father of the pupil of the liquidated Belarusian Huma-nitarian Lyceum Katsiaryna Rakovich. They demanded from the pupils to leave the flat

together with the teacher of mathematics. The children refused to do it. The apartment was rented by Viktar Savitski, father of the former pupil of the Lyceum Katsia Rakovich. This flat is used for consultations with teachers. When the residents of the porch where the flat is situated found out that the children who came there were pupils of the liquidated lyceum, they applied to Minsk City Executive Committee. They explained to the teachers they had nothing against the children, but it was the question of honor for them to inform the authorities about the lyceum dislocation. Head of the residential maintenance company warned that he would find the evidence of misuse of the rented premises and evict the tenant for it.

On ***15 September*** Belarusian Helsinki Committee addressed the Supreme Court with the complaint about illegitimacy of the president's actions when he announced the referendum. BHC also addressed the Constitutional Court, the Chamber of Representatives, the Council of the Republic, the Supreme Economic Court, and the Council of Ministers – the bodies which have the right to address the Constitutional Court – with the request to raise the issue of the legitimacy of the president's referendum decree. The Helsinki Committee reminded that the actions aimed to change the constitutional order and attain the state power by force, and by means of violating the legislation of the Republic of Belarus can be qualified as seizure or retention of the power in an unconstitutional way.

On ***16 September*** the liquidated youth organization "Belarusian Student Association" held the action "Procession of Homieless Stu-dents" devoted to the daily issue of many Belarusian students – absence of places at student dormitories. The authorities often express their pride with the fact that the number of students from villages increases. However, they make nothing to provide those students with premises for the time of study. The action participants wanted to proceed from the central railway station of Minsk (where Homieless beggars often gather) to the building of the Education Ministry in Savietskaia Street, 9 with different attributes of Homieless life – tents, sleeping bags, pots, lamps, spoons, etc. The police stopped the action by detention of seVieral students who carried a camp bed. The detainees were taken to Minsk Savietski Borough Board of Internal Affairs. Among the detained were Siarzhuk Siemianiuk, a member of BSA Council, Iury Sidun, the BSA system administrator, Alies Vasilieuski. They were accused of violating Article 166 of the Administrative Code – resistance to the police demands.

On ***16 September*** the senior editor of the independent newspaper "Birzha Informatsii" Aliena Raubietskaia was summoned to Hrodna Leninski District Prosecutor's Office concerning the publication of information concerning the upcoming referendum in

the number of the newspaper for 9 September. They informed the journalist of initiation of a criminal case against her upon part 10 of article 172 of the Administ¬rative Code (distribution of the information that insults honor and dignity of president of the Republic of Belarus). According to Raubietskaia, the claims of the prosecutor’s office concerned the following phrase of the publication: “The referendum (without which it is impossible to receive the third term) that is declared by Mr. President is a challenge to society. One needs not only shamelessness, but also scorn for people for such a step…” The case was sent to court. Aliena Raubietskaia can be awarded a fine worth 50-100 basic salaries.

On ***16 September***, the fifth anniversary of the forced disappearance of the vice-speaker of the Supreme Soviet of the 13th Convocation Viktar Hanchar and the head of the “KrasiCo” company Anatol Krasouski the police detained the human rights activists Tatsiana Reviaka (Human Rights Center Viasna) and Hary Pahaniaila (Belarusian Helsinki Com-mittee). The human rights activists were detained during the action, the aim of which was to demand objective investigation of the circumstances of forced kidnaps. Viktar Hanchar’s wife Zinaida Hanchar and the human rights activists came to the prosecutor’s office at 8.30 p.m. (workers of the office usually come there at that time). Tatsiana Reviaka handed out to the workers of the prosecutor’s office the book “Belarus. Undisclosed Crimes of Newest History” which contains the report of the special rapporteur of PACE political committee Christos Pourgourides “On the missing persons in Belarus” with evidence of relation of the highest-level officials, including the prosecutor general Viktar Sheiman to the crimes. After twenty minutes Tatsiana Reviaka and Hary Pahaniaila were detained by the special police and taken to the Tsentralny Borough Department of Internal Affairs in Minsk, where they drew up reports by terms of Article 172.3 (distribution of printed materials without the imprint).

On ***16 September*** BelTA news agency spread the news that the Ministry of Justice addressed the Supreme Court with a liquidation suit of Belarusian Helsinki Committee. BHC is accused of numerous sys-tematic violations of the Constitution, the law on non-governmental organizations, and its own Statute. BHC members know the Ministry’s claims only from BelTA reports, because they haven’t received any official messages from the Justice Ministry. BHC lawyer Alieh Hulak says: “The Ministry says BHC has violated Art 5, 52, and 53 of the Constitution. Art 5 says, that all political parties and non-governmental organizations act within the laws and the Constitution, and activities of parties and NGOs which advocate for war, social, ethnic, or religious hostility, are banned. We can’t explain what we have to do with this article. Art 52 says that everybody on the territory of the Republic of Belarus is obliged to follow the laws and the Constitution and to respect national traditions; Art 53 says that every one shall respect

dignity, rights and legal interests of other people. Probably, they mean that we do not respect the rights of the President. As to accusations of violation of Art 4 and Art 5 of the Law “On non-governmental organizations”: these articles say we are to base our activities on the Constitution and our Statute, and not to interfere in the activity of state bodies and state officials. The Ministry claims we that we have already interfered in the state matters. I wonder how they are going to formulate and motivate the accusations in the suit”. Alieh Hulak is sure the Ministry is aware of the fact that the accusations are far-fetched. He is very surprised with the Ministry’s statement about “systematic” violations committed by BHC. The human rights activist says, the Ministry officials are supposed to know that since 1995, during 9 years of its existence, BHC has received only two warnings. The last warning, received last summer, has already lost its legal effect. This regularity can’t be called “systematic”. “We got over all problems with taxes which we had during the last year. The court recognized that we were right. This is simple nonsense and outrageous lies that we systematically violate the legislation, — says Alieh Hulak, — Besides that, realizing the accusations are not sufficient, the Ministry states that BHC activities “don’t have anything in common with strengthening democracy, human rights and civic freedoms, thus contradicting the principles formulated in the final act of the session on security and cooperation in Europe and does not meet the OSCE goals” It’s clear that the Supreme Court realized how difficult it would be to consider the case and sent the suit for revision“.

On ***16 September***, the fifth anniversary of the kidnap of Viktar Hanchar his wife Zinaida Hanchar applied to president of Russian Federation. The text of the appeal reads: “Dear Mr. Putin! The events that have recently taken place in Russia couldn’t leave anybody indifferent, including my family. My son and I were born in Russia, my mother still lives here. That’s why we are really touched by everything that happens there. We have a good understanding of the pain and grief of the people who survived the terrorist action and lost their relatives. Since Viktar Hanchar was kidnapped on 16 September 1999, we, his friends and relatives, have been in the situation of hostages to political terror exercised towards our family. We have spent five years already trying to find out where are our husband, father and son, what is his fate and who is guilty of his kidnap. During all these years we have faced constant silence and inaction of Belarusian authorities and the law machinery of the country. We ask you, as the man who possesses huge authority in the world, has seen tears, pain and sufferings, who has family and children, to use your influence to support us in our extremely hard situation.”

On ***16 September*** a picket held in Stockholm marked the 5th anni-versary of forced disappearance of the politician Viktar Hanchar and his friend Anatol Krasouski. It took

place near the building of Swedish Parliament. Among the picket participants there were the deputies of the Parliament Cecilia Vigstrom from Liberal party, Leif Bjornlund from Green party and Urban Alin, member of social democratic party, head of the Parliamentary commission on international affairs. The action participants held portraits of the missing persons and national white-red-white flags. They also held out fly-sheets with information about the missing persons. Cecilia Vigstrom, who has been to Belarus for three times already, says Swedish politicians are concerned with the situation in the country.

On ***16 September*** in Salihorsk during the action devoted to the fifth anniversary of the disappearance of Viktar Hanchar and Anatol Krasouski, the police detained Iauhien Valadzko and Uladzimir Piat¬rovich, who were taken to Salihorsk Department of Internal Affairs, where they drew up reports registering the administrative violation.

In the ***night of 16 and 17 September*** in Minsk in Ramanauskaya Slabada Street, the police detained Aliaksei Charniaieu and Aliena Valyniets-Charniaieva. They were taken to the Department of Internal Affairs of Maskouski Borough, where they made a report by terms of Article 143 of the Code of Administrative Offences (violation of sanitation rules). In an hour the detained people were released.

On ***17 September*** “Alliance-media” enterprise, founder of the Obozrevatel newspaper, applied to Minsk Leninski Borough Court asking to exact about 1 million rubles of additional court expenses for an article from the newspaper “Narodnaia Volia” “Bandit Treatment of Lieanid Levin by Sergey Atroshchenko’s Obozrevatel. In February Leninski Borough Court partially granted the suit of Siarhiei Atroshchanka against Narodnaia Volia. The newspaper’s protest gave no result. According to the “Alliance-media”, it spent 836 thousand rubles on court expenses and now intends to exact them from the newspaper”.

On ***17 September*** Mahilou police detained the Zubr movement activists Mikalai Iliin and Iauhien Suvorau for handing out printed materials. They were detained after having handed out the Zubr newspaper in the university. The police officers of Tsentralny Department of Internal Affairs in Mahiliou drew up reports by terms of Article 172 of the Code of Administrative Offences (distribution of printed materials without the imprint). The police officers told the detained activists that they would receive subpoenas to appear in court and also notified them that they had been filmed, while handing out the newspaper copies.

On ***17 September*** during the concert of Viacheslav Butusov the police detained eight members of the unregistered opposition youth movement Zubr: Daryia Maldavanava, Aliaksandr Ushko, Mikita Sasim and Maksim Hromau (for raising flags with the organization logo), Aliena Korbach, Zinaida Kryvanos and Artsiom Salauiou (for distribution of the Zubr newspaper).

On ***17 September*** the committee on legal affairs and human rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the PACE secretary general Terry Davis sharply criticized Belarusian authorities over the detention of Tatsiana Reviaka and Hary Pahaniaila on 16 October for distribution of the PACE report about the missing persons. According to him, the arrests of the human rights activists violate the freedom of expression and distribution of information in Belarus. “Such actions can lead only to further isolation of the country from European and world community”, — stated the secretary general.

On ***18 September*** in Banhalor Square there took a meeting of protest that was organized by the religious association of churches of Full Gospel Christians. Believers from Hrodna, Lida, Barysau, Vilieika, Mazyr, Asipovichy, Dziarzhynsk and other towns and cities of Belarus took part in the action. They protested against the «Law on freedom of conscience» that was adopted by the Chamber of Representatives in June 2002. The believers consider this law discriminative, because it considerably limits the right of citizens to confess any religious views in Belarus. The action participants held the following slogans: «Constitution is the main law!», «The halls we’ve Been Expelled from are still empty!», «Official is not law, but a people’s servant», «Yes to Constitution, no to lawles-sness!».

On ***19 September*** one of the sons of the chair of the nation-wide strike committee of businessmen Valiery Lievanieuski was detained in Kalhasny Market in Lida for distributing fly-sheets. Dzmitry Lievanieuski was taken to the on-duty section of Lida Department of Internal Affairs, where the district police officer performed a personal search of Dzmitry Lievanieuski. The police officers confiscated all the printed materials Dzmitry had (the bulletin Pradprymalnik and fly-sheets).

On ***20 September*** the Italian Embassy in Minsk, where the European Union mission resides, expressed concern about the charges against Hrodna political activists Valiery Lievanieuski and Aliaksandr Vasilieu accused of alleged insult of President Aliaksandr Lukashenka. The EU mission in Minsk regards this incident to be “disproportion between the crime and the punishment” and reminds that the accused were deprived of the right to summon to the trial their witnesses, who could be able to defend them. The EU

mission doubted the proper implementation of legal norms of a fair trial. The trial itself was considered a "politically motivated action aimed to attack the freedom of speech and Belarusians' civil rights".

On ***20 September*** Volha Zavadskaia sued to Republican Prose-cutor's Office with the demand to bring the criminal case concerning the disappearance of her son Dzmitry Zavadski because on 20 July A. Lu-kashenka publicly stated he had materials that could turn Zavadski's case into anti-case.

On ***20 September*** Leninski Borough Court of Hrodna ruled to impose a fine of 10 basic units (180 thousand rubles) on Ivan Raman, head of the regional branch of the REPAM Trade Union in Hrodna Region. The trade union activist was detained on 3 August for distributing the trade union bulletin. The court found Ivan Raman guilty of violating Article 167-10 of CAO of Belarus (acting on behalf of an unregistered orga¬nization).

On ***20 September*** Hrodna city authorities received an application for a picket. The purpose of the action is to inform citizens about growing pressure on the independent press in Belarus. The application was filed by Paviel Mazheika on behalf of the Belarusian Association of Jour-nalists. He says, the picket participants will protest against administrative case of Aliena Raubietskaia, editor-in-chief of Birzha Informatsii newspaper. She is charged with violation of Article 5 of the Law on press, which does not allow using mass media to spread information which insults the honor and dignity of the President.

On ***20 September*** Vitsiebsk members of Christian Conservative Party Uladzimir Plieshchanka, Aliaksandr Salauian, and Barys Khamaida organized a picket calling to boycott the parliamentary election and the 17 October referendum. The police stopped the action one hour after it had begun and took all three picket participants to a police station. The police officers drew up detention reports which said the picketers had violated the law on street actions by organizing an unsanctioned event in the city center.

On ***20 September*** Nina Buinitskaya, deputy editor-in-chief of Shklou District newspaper Udarny front (established by Shklou District Executive Committee), was fired. According to the editor-in-chief Aliaksandr Bialiasau, she resigned «of her own will». At the same time, according to the information of the BAJ monitoring service, the deputy editor-in-chief was fired because she had allowed the printing of «unverified material». The 18 September issue of the Udarny front published a rea-der's letter signed «B.Kastsiuk, labor veteran». The message was under the heading «Referendum is the right decision». The letter author staunchly supported the idea of referendum, and

praised A.Lukashenka's desire to ask for the people's opinion. «B.Kastsiuk, war veteran» added a poem appeal on the head of state, in which he expressed his support for Lukashenka. However, after the newspaper was released, it turned out that the printed poem was an «acro-poem»: the first letters make a sentence whose content is opposite to the message by «B.Kastsiuk». Ms Buinitskaya was made responsible for the printed poem, because the editor-in-chief was away at that time. Now the district leadership is looking for the author of the scandalous message. The search is all the more difficult because the editorial office lost the envelope of the typewritten letter.

On ***21 September*** the Justice Department of Regional Executive Committees started unscheduled checks of the organization structures of the BPF Party. According to the BPF Party Office, more than 10 organization structures of the party went through checkups. The Department of Justice officials were first of all interested in minutes of sittings which nominated delegates to the BPF Party congress that nominated candidates to the Chamber of Representatives. Simulta¬neously, the BPF Party Soym received a letter from the Ministry of Justice signed by Minister V.R. Halavanau, which said that «in view of the duty of service» the Party is requested to produce within three days all the documents relating to the Party congress. It should be noted that the BPF Party had already submitted at the Ministry of Justice request all the documents relating to the congress that took place on 29 August 2004. Also, the congress itself was closely supervised by the Ministry of Justice representatives N.Fishkina and A.Kharyton. It is indicative that the Ministry of Justice started these checkups during the election campaign. Uladzimir Labkovich, secretary of the BPF Party Office, comments, «Yesterday Vintsuk Viachorka, the BPF Party Chair, and I were called for a conversation with the deputy head of the department for public associations of the Ministry of Justice Mr. Slizheuski. The conversation mainly concerned the activity of the public initiative Five+». Mr. Slizheuski repeatedly stated that the Ministry of Justice wants constructive collaboration with political parties and does not have any grievances against the activity of the BPF Party. Which was why we were surprised by the Ministry of Justice demands. All the more so that we have submitted data on the organization structures of the parties to the Ministry of Justice the third time this year. I have an impression that someone is interested in getting our party's nominations cancelled using any available method. Surely, the authorities are not satisfied with the number of registered candidates who represent the democratic parties».

On ***21 September*** the doors of the Vitsiebsk office of the BSDH, where the Vitsebsk-based initiative For Protection of Constitution took place were sealed. The seals were on the doors of the BSDP (Narodnaia Hramada) and UCP offices which occupy the same

premised in Gertsen Street. Back in June the Vitsiebsk members of the party received officials letters from the managers of the Construction Company #9 (which owns the premises), which cancelled the rental contracts. Sources in the construction company, who refused to disclose their identity, admitted that «eviction» had been ordered by the City Executive Committee. However, the situation then was sorted out by the lawyers who informed that the contracts annulled in this way is not legal. Now, when the city well knows of the civil initiative created to resist the referendum declared by Aliaksandr Lukashenka, the Vitsebsk-based party members are not so sure that the relations with the construction company #9 can be brought back to normal in the same «peaceful» way. By the way, the conference attended by representatives of provinces had to be conducted out in the street.

On ***21 September*** Piatro Huzaieuski, editor-in-chief of Hantsavitski Chas independent newspaper was denied the right to receive information. In the morning he came to the open session of the district Council. The local councilors had Hantsavichy city and area land improvement on the agenda. However, during the opening Council speaker Barys Astrautsou drew the councilors' attention to the presence of the independent newspaper editor at the session. He also suggested the councilors should decide by vote if the reporter should stay in the room. Nobody voted in favor of allowing the reporter to stay in the room. Five people voted against that (there were about 100 councilors at the session). Head of Hantsavichy executive administration Uladzimir Stoliar actively spoke against the presence of the reporter. Simultaneously, Hantsavichy police chief threatened Huzaieuski with administrative responsibility. Nobody took into account the reporter's claim that he was just executing his professional duties. At the same time, reporters of the state-run local Sovetskoye Polessie newspaper were present all the way through the Council session. Similar case happened to Huzaieuski on August 28. The police did not allow the reporter to be present at the district conference of education employees, held in the building of Hantsavichy School # 3.

On ***22 September*** the court of Liakhavitski Borough of Brest Region granted the suit filed by Sofia Iasko, a reporter of the independent newspaper Hantsavitski chas, against the editorial office of the district newspaper Sovietskoye Polesye and its senior editor Halina Mazina. The court acknowledged that the official district periodical had distributed untruthful information that undermine the honor, dignity and the business reputation of the independent newspaper's journalist. The journalist filed a suit with Hantsavichy District Court after H.Mazina printed an article called «Look back on yourself, or On a Beam in the Eye» which appeared on19 May 2004 in the Sovietskoye Polesye. The author of the article accused the independent periodical author of moral grubbiness, lack of

professionalism, disrespect for state symbols, etc. Sevieral court hearings had occurred before the court went over to Liakhavichy District Court, with the proceedings closed to the public. As a result, Liakhavichy District Court chaired by A.I.Hushchyn ruled that the editorial office of the Sovietskoye Polesye and H.Mazina should print refutation of the article on the first page of the periodical, and offer their apologies to Sofia Iasko and the newspaper readers. Also, the court ruled that Sovietskoye Polesye and Halina Mazina should pay 49 thousand rubles each in order to compensate the legal expensed incurred by S.Iasko. The ruling can be appealed within 10 days in Brest Regional Court.

On ***22 September*** during a picket outside Vitsiebsk District Executive Committee the police detained the members of the CCP-BPF Uladzimir Plieshchanka, Aliaksandr Salauian and Barys Khamaida who agitated for boycotting the elections and the referendum on 17 October. From Chyhunachny Borough Department of Internal Affairs, they were taken to court, from where Mr. Khamaida was soon released: he did not unfold the poster so the testifying police officers did not have arguments for implicating him in the picketing. The punishment was based on the poster saying: «Empty polling stations are the best means of preventing falsifications». Judge Aliena Hrabianchuk found Uladzimir Plieshchanka guilty of the unauthorized picketing and imposed a fine of 160 basic units on him (about 3 million rubles). Aliaksandr Salauian is required to appear in court on 27 September.

On ***23 September*** under age Aliaksandr Razhalouski was detained in Brest. The police detained him for spreading “Say “No” to Lukashenka” leaflets and took him to Maskouski police department. Three officers of criminal investigation department and representative of juvenile delinquency commission senior lieutenant Natallja Kadzienskaia dealt with his case. Police deputy chief Vital U. Bazylevich ordered to report violation under Art 172-3 of the Code of Administrative Offences (distribution of printed materials without imprint). The case was transferred to the juvenile delinquency commission.

On ***23 September*** the Supreme Court sent liquidation suit against Belarusian Helsinki Committee back to Justice Ministry for revision. BHC members consider that the evidence that the claims of the registering body are groundless. The Supreme Court decided the claim was written improperly. One week ago the Ministry of Justice applied to the Supreme Court with the request to close down Belarusian Helsinki Committee for alleged “violation of the Constitution, the Law on non-governmental organizations, and its own statute”. The Ministry experts say BHC committed the violations when it urged the citizens to say “no” to the Referendum. BHC says the Ministry’s claims are groundless. BHC chair Tatsiana Protska thinks the authorities will continue to persecute the organization.

On ***23 September*** Brest Regional Court heard the appeal of the Malaryta district prosecutor against the ruling by the Malaryta District Court that granted the libel suit to the BPF Party. In the beginning of the hearing BPF representative Valiantsin Stefanovich submitted three applications. Among them was the request to watch the video with S. Strok's speech. The court rejected the application "because of the absence of technical capabilities". In his speech Valiantsin Stefanovich stressed that BPF Party considers the decision of Malaryta court absolutely legitimate and grounded. He claimed the protest should be rejected and gave legally grounded arguments on every point of the protest. The representative of Brest prosecutor's office supported the protest in her speech. Her arguments were not really clear even for lawyers. However, her main point was easy to grasp: It's not Strok's fault, he wanted to specify his words but was not given a chance. After the break the court read out the decision: to satisfy the protest of Malaryta district prosecutor's office, to reverse the court decision and to reject all BPF claims. Valiantsin Stefanovich comments: "This is a completely politically-motivated decision. However, certain information we receive from Malaryta gives us grounds to fear for the fate and job of Judge Barycheuski who made a fair verdict in July. Today's court verdict gives logical grounds to conclude that BPF Party really did cooperate with the nazi Germany during the WWII. Obviously, we will appeal against the decision to the chair of Brest regional court, and, if he doesn't satisfy our appeal, to the Supreme Court. This is insulting. Again it highlights the dependence of the judicial system in Belarus".

On ***23 September*** the Belarusian Embassy in Russia addressed management and reporters of Russian mass media about their coVierage of Belarusian parliamentary elections and referendum. The Belarusian party "regretted to state" that "some Russian reporters present biased information about Belarusian events in their reports". The authors of the appeal hope that in the future these journalists will "display propriety and consideration when covering preparations for the parliamentary election, the referendum… and the process of Belarus, Russia integra-tion". "It's bewildering that some reporters actively "transmit" the opinion of the Belarusian opposition members who do not have the real support of the population and do not reflect the public opinion in the country", — reads the appeal, — "We consider it perplexing to see these people on pages and TV screens. The people who do not conceal their anti-Russian position and negative attitude to the present Russian policy towards Belarus", — stress the document authors. "We expect that in further coVierage and analysis of the relations between our countries all mess media (both Russian and Belarusian) will be standing on constructive and consolidating lines", — reads the appeal of the Belarusian Embassy to Russian media.

On ***23 September*** Mikhail Marynich was charged with another two criminal offences: theft or damage of documents, stamps, seals (Art 377 part 2) and larceny committed with abuse of power, by an organized group or at an especially high rate (Art 210 part 4), reported Marynich's defense lawyer Viera Stramkouskaia. In particular, her client was charged with stealing documents which allegedly are a State secret, and taking office equipment, which had been handed over for free temporary use to Business Initiative NGO headed by him. Let us remind you that earlier Marynich was charged under Art 295 part 2 of the Criminal Code (illegal actions with firearms, ammunition and explosi¬ves). According to Viera Stramkouskaia, two new charges came as a bolt from the blue for her client. She says, Mikhail Marynich wrote a protest statement on the indictment paper and refused to testify. He believes the actions of the law-enforcing bodies are politically-motivated and are aimed at preventing him from running in the presidential election-2006. Marynich will be ineli¬gible to run even if he receives a conditional sentence. His lawyer believes all charges against Marynich "are baseless and groundless". In particular, she says, the documents in question have been declassified since long ago, while the office equipment belongs to the United States Embassy that has never filed any claims on the matter. Viera Stramkouskaia points out that the US Embassy will be qualified as a victim in this case. Marynich's detention is scheduled to expire on 26 September. The lawyer says most likely it will be extended. The charge under Art 210 part 4 of the Criminal Code is considered a grave crime and carries a prison sentence of 7 to 15 years and seizure of property.

On ***23 September*** Salihorsk Town Executive Committee banned the Independent Trade Union of Minors of RUP PO Belaruskaliy to hold a picket against the violations of rights of the independent trade unions.

On ***24 September*** Valiery Shchukin was detained for distributing leaflets against early voting. The prominent opposition member and human rights activist distributed leaflets calling citizens not to vote early in Vitsebsk. According to Valiery Shchukin, he spent his own money to print 290 copies of leaflets. Police officers took him to Piershamaiski police station and reported violation of public order, accusing the opposition member of illegal distribution of unregistered press. Piershamaiski commission for administrative offences will examine the incident. Mr. Shchukin still does not know the date of the hearing. The police attached 137 leaflets to the report as "material evidence". Valiery Shchukin believes that the police officers paid their attention to the text on the leaflets. He thinks they decided to use any means to stop him from spreading the information. The leaflets spoke about possible fraud during the early voting

and about active campaign in favor of certain candidates carried out by Vitsiebsk authorities.

On ***24 September*** Information Minister Uladzimir Rusakievich signed an order suspending the Belarusian-language independent periodical Rehiyanalnaya Hazeta for three months. On that very day the Ministry of Information sent two notifications to the newspaper founder and the editorial staff. They are accused of breaking seVieral articles of the Belarusian Law «On the Press and Other Mass Media». The periodical editor-in-chief and co-founder Aliaksandr Mantsevich considers the Ministry's actions politically motivated and directly connected with the upcoming election and the referendum. According to the Minister's order, the editorial staff violated Article 9 of the Law on Press, having issued and delivered 9, 100 copies of a non-registered «TV Week» supplement, together with newspaper issue #32 of August 6, 2004. Also, the editors are accused of violating Art 10 of the Law on Press. The Ministry of Information decided that the newspaper did not observe the terms of its registration. Thus, being registered as «the mass political periodical», it represents itself as «the information and advertising periodical» in the data-line. Instead of 7 issues per week, it publishes only one. Besides that, the Information Ministry points out that under the terms of registration the newspaper is to be distributed «in the Republic of Belarus and other countries of the world». However, in reality, it was distributed in only "regionally", i.e. Maladechna, Vilieika, Smarhon, Ashmiany, Valozhyn, Miadziel, Astraviets, and Minsk. The Ministry voices similar claims against the newspaper founder. He is accused of failing to inform the Ministry about changes in periodicity of publishing and the distribution area within a month term for «introducing the corresponding changes in the edition's registration certificate». The Ministry of Information treats these facts as violation of Art 11 of the Law on Press and of Council's of Ministers Regulation #727 of May 30, 2003 «On Amounts and Procedure of Registration Charges for Mass Media Registration in the Republic of Belarus». The newspaper's co-founder and editor-in-chief Aliaksandr Mantsevich considers the claims to his periodical to be far-fetched. According to him, the «TV Week» supplement can't be regarded as a separate edition, despite the different paper format, as it has the through pagination with the Rehiyanalnaia Hazieta brand put on each of the supplement pages. A. Mantsevich especially stresses that a number of state editions issue similar supplements, and change not only the paper format, but the language of the supplements as well (e.g. «Maladechans¬kaia Hazieta»). Surprisingly, these facts provoke no objections on the part of the Ministry of Information. A. Mantsevich admits the incorrect indication of the periodical theme in the data-line is the publisher's mistake. Nevertheless, in his opinion, suspension of newspaper publishing is

too serious a punishment. According to the publisher, the claims regarding the newspaper's distribution area were absolutely groundless. The Ministry even didn't happen to know either that the periodical had a signed contract with «Belposhta» national delivery company about the newspaper distribution and subscription delivery across Belarus or that the periodical was represented in the National Subscription Catalogue. The Ministry's Registration Department admitted its blunder. A. Mantsevich emphasizes the fact that currently the Rehiyanalnaia Hazieta remains to be the only totally Belarusian language non-governmental regional periodical in the country.

On ***24 September*** the Ministry of Information suspended the inde-pendent newspaper Narodny predprinimatel

On ***24 September*** Aliaksandr Salauian and Uladzimer Plieshchan-ka held an unsanctioned picket. Members of Christian Conservative Party held posters: "Empty polling stations are the best means against fraud", and "don't go to the polls – they will cheat anyway". In an hour the picketers were detained by police. Special service policemen who took the activists to Chyhunachny police department admitted they had the order to detain the picketers and stop their events. When they were detained for the first time, on September 20, the police threatened the activists they would be taken to court and tried for holding a street action. After the second detention, on September 22, Uladzimir Plieshchanka was tried immediately and fined almost 3 million BYR (1 400 USD). The trial after their third detention on September 24 took place right away. Chyhunachny borough court fou

OCTOBER

On ***1 October*** it became known that Siarzhuk Siemianiuk, a Bela-rusian Students' Association Board member has been expelled from Belarusian State Agricultural-Technical University (BSATU). On 29 September a representative of the secret service telephoned to the student's mobile number. He introduced himself as Vadzim and said the following: "I know you are experiencing problems with studying but I can solve them. Let's meet". Siarzhuk flatly refused. Vadzim's number was recorded by Siarzhuk's mobile phone. According to the Minsk City Telephone Network belongs to the building with the address Praspekt Skaryny, 17, the KGB center office. In spring KGB people visited the dean's office of the Department where Siarzhuk studied, and tried to make him speak about International and Human Rights activity of BSA. After Siarzhuk refused to contact with the secret service, he received unsatisfactory mark at one of the exams. At the moment the examiner refuses to take the exam. Early September Mikalai Zaiko, BSATU lecturer, announced that he would never put a satisfactory mark to Siarzhuk Siemianuk at the exam. Siarzhuk tried to approach the tutor for five times but every time the latter refused to take an exam. The student forwarded to the Deans office an appeal with a request to pass an exam to a commission as he does not consider the mark objective and as he is sure of his knowledge. Especially for such situations to solve disagreements between a student and a tutor there exists a term "passing exam to a commission". On September 22, 2004, a meeting of a Chair and Department Council was held which resolved to deny BSA member's request. It is obvious that the Council was not following the principle of justice and legal right of the student on objective assessment of his knowledge, but a usual cowardly obeDence to the order from above. On September 22 there was no Siarzhuk's name among expelled student in the list on the bulletin board near the Dean's office. Siarzhuk Siemianuk is an active BSA member who takes the position of the Member of BSA Board and regional coordinator. During the last BSA action "Marching of Homieless Students" he was detained together with two others BSA members. On September 28, 2004 the court accused him of humiliating the article #166 of the Administrative Code of Belarus – resisting to police. He was charged with 133 000 BRB (approximately $60) though the witnesses testified the opposite. The attempt to press on Siarzhuk with obviously illegal expelling from the University is regarded by BSA members as an attempt to harm the organization in general. But the BSA Board claim that they will fight for the BSA members' rights as well as the rights of all the rest students on getting education. Starting with this year Siarzhuk Siemianuk will be studying at Vilnius Pedagogical University at the Department of Belarusian Philology and he will continue being active with the activity of Belarusian Students' Association.

On ***1 October*** Aliaksei Shydlouski, a Zubr movement activist, was detained in Minsk. He was detained at the Pushkinskaia metro station for distributing fly-sheets that urge people to come to Kastrychnitskaia Square in Minsk on 18 October – on the day following the Day of the elections and the referendum. A.Shydlouski was taken to the Frunzenski Borough Department of Internal Affairs in Minsk, where they drew up a report registering violation of Article 167.1 CAO of Belarus (violation of the order of organizing and conducting mass events). According to the administrative offence report, A.Shydlouski is accused of violating Article 8 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus On Mass Events (he distributed printed materials urging people to take part in the mass event before the latter has been granted official permission).

On ***1 October*** the journalist and human rights activist Valiery Shchu-kin was illegally searched in the Vitsiebsk Railroad Station. The police detained Valiery Shchukin, then took him to the special room for the police, searched him and required he should show the contents of his brief case. They examined all the documents thoroughly. The documents were mostly Valiery Shchukin's correspondence with the procurator's office, where he appealed against the illegal actions of the police; and his complaints filed with the Central Election Committee, and sent to the OSCE office regarding the violations of the election legislation.

On ***2 October*** around 30 people gathered in the Free Trade Union office to discuss the issues regarding the scheduled constituent assembly of a new public association. After half an hour, people in plain clothes arrived and blocked all the exits. Then police officers came and started filming all of those present. Though Mr. Antonchyk is an FTU member and does not need to seek permission for holding assemblies in the office of his organization, the police drew up a report registering the organization of an unauthorized action. In the court the police officers referred to the absence of a deed from Minsk City Executive Committee, which permitted the gathering. According to the lawyer Tatsiana Stankievich, the current legislation does not require permission for holding an assembly by an initiative group. But the police officers stood their ground all the same. The law says that prior to the constituent assembly of a public association, an initiative group has to gather and identify the founders and the organization mission. Everyone thought the judge would withdraw the case. So the verdict (15 days of arrest) came as an absolute surprise to all, «This is, of course, unprecedented because in Belarus no court has ever before inflicted arrest for the gathering of an organization committee for establishing a public association. And this happened in the room owned by the head of the organization, who had agreed for the room to be used in such a way», said Siarhiei Antonchyk after the verdict has been passed.

On ***2 October*** Khrystafor Zheliapau's car was stopped at Beshanko¬vichy by traffic police that said that the car was registered as a stolen one, and they had an order from the Beshankovichy Department of Internal Affairs to sort it all out. The police opened the car boot and found fly-sheets urging to say no at the referendum. The fly-sheets were confiscated.

On ***3 October*** in Brest police patrolling the streets detained a Brest school teacher for distributing anti-presidential fly-sheets.

On ***4 October*** in the village of Krupitsa the local police inspector detained Hienadz Taliaronka, Aliaksei Sychyk and Aliaksei Radaman for distributing fly-sheets against the referendum.

On ***4 October*** in Vitsiebsk the activist of the Conservative-Christian Party Barys Khamaida was fined 380 thousand rubles. The police officers detained Barys Khamaida on 1 October outside Vitsiebsk District Executive Committee, where he was handing out copies of the Belorusskaya delovaya gazeta, while holding a small poster that said «We Will not Go to Mendacious Referendum and Pseudo-Elections». From the police station, where they drew up a report registering unauthorized picketing, he was taken to Chykhunachny District Court. However, judge Aliena Hrabianchuk refused to hear the detention case but ruled to discontinue the proceedings put off on 27 September because the police officers had provided incorrectly formalized documents. Aliena Hrabianchuk inflicted on Barys Khamaida a fine of 20 basic units.

On ***4 October*** Hrodna City Executive Committee refused the Chair of the local BAJ branch Paviel Mazheika to hold a protest picket on 4 October in the city part named after Zhyliber. The refusal signed by the deputy chair of the executive committee Valiantsin Liavonau reads as follows: «The Hrodna City Executive Committee cannot grant permission for holding on 4 October 2004 … owing to the violation of Article 5 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus On Mass Events in the Republic of Belarus. The letter does not specify which provision of the article the journalist violated. The picket was sought because of a court case initiated by the procurator's office against the senior editor of the Birzha informatsii Aliena Raubietskaia for undermining the dignity of the Presi¬dent of the Republic of Belarus. On 30 September Leninski Borough Court inflicted on the journalist a fine of 1 million 300 thousand rubles. By staging the protest, the Hrodna journalists wanted to inform the city residents of yet another attempt to apply increased pressure on the independent press in Belarus.

On ***4 October*** at 12.00 five Hrodna journalists staged a picket in Savietskaia Street, protesting against reinforced pressure on the independent press. The action was staged because of the verdict inflicted on the editor of the Birzha informatsii newspaper Aliena Raubietskaia, who was charged with distributing information degrading the President of Belarus. The journalists held large sheets of paper, which said «They Imprison Journalists in Hrodna!!!». Iryna Charniauka, Anatol Makushyn, Natalia Makushyna, Paviel Mazheika and Iulia Kotskaia stood there for about 15 minutes before police officers of Leninski Borough Department of Internal Affairs approached them and demanded they should break up. After 10 minute long discussions, the journalists started to walk down Savietskaya Street in the same chain, holding the slogan in their hands. The police officers followed them all along, one of them filming the pickets. The journalists' protest aroused the interest of the passers-by, who stopped to read the slogan and ask questions.

On ***5 October*** the weekly Rehiyanalnyie viedamastsi was suspended for three months. This independent periodical comes out in Horki, Mahilou region, and has a circulation of 4 thousand copies. The Ministry of Infor¬mation and Press presented seVieral grievances against the newspaper. The ministry believes that the current topics, the distribution territory, the periodicity and the language of the Rehiyanalnyie vedamastsi do conform to the information submitted during the registration. The demo¬cratic community of Horki believes that the reasons for the suspension are formal, and speaks of political motivation because Rehiyanalnyia viedamastsi expressed a viewpoint on the political situation in the country, and in particular, on the referendum, which was different from the official position.

On ***5 October*** the disappeared ORT cameraman Dzmitry Zavadski was invited to take part in the elections and the referendum on 17 October 2004. Volha Zavadskaia, Dzmitry's mother, reported this to the Human Rights Center Viasna. She received a mailed letter inviting her son to come to the polls, though her son was legally acknowledged as dead in 2003 and so was deregistered from the apartment. This fact shows that the district election commissions did not take measures needed to update the electoral registers, including letters to registration agencies or other methods. According to the Election Code, district commissions should update electoral registers.

On ***5 October*** Minsk Leninski Borough Court finished the considera¬tion of the suit of the public corporation "Alliance-media" to the newspaper Narodnaia Volia and Lieanid Levin. The court satisfied the demand of the plaintiff to exact from the defendant additional court expenses that appeared during the previous trial (concerning the decision of Leninski Borough Court of 18 February on the case of the publication "Bandit Treatment of Lieanid Lievin by Sergey Atroshchenko's "Obozrevatel"). We should remind

that similar decision was issued by Minsk Leninski Borough Court on 29 September, during the consideration of the suit of the entrepreneur Siarhiei Atroshchanka to "Narodnaia Volia". At that time judge ruled to exact from the newspaper 776 thousand rubles for compensation of additional court expenses (the case concerned the publication "What Business Feels Well in Belarus?").

On ***5 October*** the editorial board of the Molodiozhny Prospekt newspaper found out their newspaper was suspended for three months by the information minister Uladzimir Rusakievich on 10 September.. The ministry is of the opinion that the newspaper grossly violated article 10 of the Law "About press and other mass media", while the senior editor of the newspaper Siarhiei Kazlouski is sure "Molodyozhny Prospekt" fell victim to the clear-up of independent press on the eve of the referendum. According to Kazlouski, the Ministry of Information considered as "gross violations" the change of the language of the edition and free distribution of two special numbers in July in "Sierabranka" suburb. According to S. Kazlouski, these numbers concerned the future parliamentary election. In private, it contained the speech of the deputy of the Chamber of Representatives Uladzimir Navasiad (co-founder of the edition) and the lawyer who explained to citizens how they could decrease the possibility of falsifications during the election. In August a representative of the Ministry of Information phoned to the senior editor and said that Russian language and free distribution weren't allowed during the registration of the newspaper. Immediately after that the editorial board directed to the ministry the packet of documents which were necessary to introduce changes to the registration certificate. The newspaper "Molodyozhny Prospekt" was registered by the Republican public youth organization "Hramadzianski forum" and Uladzimir Navasiad. He thinks that the newspaper has been suspended because those who violate the electoral legislation during preparation to the election and the referendum are afraid to see their surnames in it.

On ***6 October*** the Ministry of Information suspends the Nedelya newspaper for three months. The editorial staff of the independent newspaper Nedelya managed to issue only one number before the suspension order that was signed by information minister Uladzimir Rusakievich on 4 October. However, according to the information that was given to RFE/RL by the registration department of the legal board of the ministry the order was registered on 5 October. On the other hand, the vice-head of the private Unitarian enterprise editorial house "Niamiha" that issues "Nedelya" pointed out he had no information about pretensions to the newspaper. Recently the newspaper has been checked up by the tax inspection, but the talk of the inspectors with the newspaper administration has been postponed. The newspaper had to be printed in the Russian city

of Smolensk, because all Belarusian printing houses refused from its printing and "Belsaiuzdruk" and "Belposhta" state distribution nets refused to conclude agreements for distribu¬tion. According to Tsynkievich, there are no other reasons to persecute the edition but political ones: "Regime makes it not because of its force, but due to its weakness. The authorities feel unconfident and close press in order to block sources of public information."

On ***6 October*** the human rights activist Tatsiana Reviaka was fined 5 basic units (95 thousand rubles) for distributing printed materials without the imprint. The fine was imposed by the administrative committee of the Piershamaiski Borough Administration of Minsk.

6 October Zinaida Hanchar received by post the invitation to take part in the referendum concerning the third term to Aliaksandr Luka-shenka addressed to her husband, Viktar Hanchar, who was kidnapped five years ago, her son and her. Zinaida Hanchar considers this invitation as an indicator of honesty of the organizers of the election and refe¬rendum. Zinaida Hanchar received an invitation to come to the polling station on 17 October together with her husband Viktar Hanchar and the son Andrei. Communal services supply election commissions with the information about electorate, on the basis of which the electoral lists are formed. Zinaida Hanchar remembered the 1990s, when communal services employees updated this information by visiting apartments. Now, says Zinaida Hanchar, no one has done such adjustments.

On ***6 October*** in Homiel police detained the chair of the regional branch of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee Alies Iausieienka. He was transporting in his minivan 30 thousand copies of the news bulletin issued by the Civil Initiative Partnership. The bulletin was all devoted to the elections and the referendum to allow Aliaksandr Lukashenka to be elected to a third presidential term. One of the central articles of the bulletin was called «Referendum is Beyond the Law». In the police station of Chykhunachny Borough of Homiel, Alies Yausieyenka was kept for almost three hours. They made a report registering the violation of Article 172 of the Administrative Code (distribution of printed periodicals whose content aims to inflict damage to the state and public order).

On ***6 October*** Homiel City Executive Committee did not permit 11 residents to stage pickets against the life-long presidency for Lukashenka.

On ***7 and 8 October*** the police of Homiel and Homiel region conducted seVieral actions with "participation" of members of the liquidated Homiel regional public association Civil Initiatives and the unregistered Civil Alternative. The police suspected

them in theft of things and a car and also looked for a bomb at the organization office. On 7 October police inspector paid a visit there. He said that in the microbus of the lawyer Lieanid Sudalienka there were stolen things. Then he called other policemen, told them to come and help in the search. However, when the policemen arrived, the microbus wasn't in its place. In two hours it appeared at the entrance of the office again. According to the head of "Civil Alternative" Uladzimir Katsora, nothing disappeared from it and nothing new appeared either. The following day Lieanid Sudalienka, who wasn't registered as candidate to parliament, went to the town of Khoyniki by this bus. There he wanted to thank electors for their support and agitate them to vote against giving Aliaksandr Lukashenka the possibility to run for the third term. Near Khoiniki the microbus was ringed by the police, who stated the bus was stolen. As a result they detained Sudalienka and searched the bus. At the same time a police major appeared in the office of "Civil Initiatives" in Homiel. He said that there was a bomb in the building. In seVieral minutes the building was ringed by the police and the organization activists left it. According to Katsora, about 80 policemen participated in the "search for bomb", including the prosecutor of Homiel Savietski Borough Prosecutor's Office. "The office door was closed and the police wanted to break it when I came, — said Katsora. He agreed to open the door with the condition that only two policemen and sapper would enter the office. However, when he opened the door, about a dozen of them ran in. They found no bomb there and registered it in their report. In his remarks Mr. Katsora mentioned that there were many strangers during the search. Activists of "Civil Initiatives" think that the events of 7 and 8 October were a part of the "prophylaxis" aimed at confiscation of the informational materials, prepared for the anti-referendum meeting of 10 October.

On ***7 October*** police detained the activists of the election headquart-ers of the candidates Zinaida Bandarenka, Smarhon, and Iury Kha-dyka, Minsk. After accusing the detained activists of violating the public order, the police made reports by terms of different articles of the Administrative Code. Until 10 p.m. Zinaida Bandarenka stayed in Smarhon Department of Police together with her four assistants. The activists were detained as they were putting election leaflets into mailboxes. The police explained that the leaflets allegedly had not been produced by a printing house, which is in violation of the election legislation. The entire print-run was confiscated, and reports registering the violation were drawn up. Zinaida Bandarenka showed the police chief the license which he, however, ignored. Three participants of the permitted agitation picket in support of Iury Khadyka spent two hours in the on-duty section of the police department. Larysa Liaparskaia was charged with distributing printed materials without the imprint because

she had a sticker attached to the sleeve, which said «Say No». Another two pickets were charged with holding white-red-white flags.

On ***7 October*** the activists of the election campaign and the head of the Brest Branch of the Belarusian Social Democratic Party (Narodnaia Hramada) were kept in the police department, where they tried to convince them they had no right to do the agitation. The activists of the initiative group of Anatol Liaukovich, who ran in the Belavezha electoral district #7, came to Kamianiets to distribute the officially allowed agitation materials about their candidate. However, the local police stopped these actions, referring to the order issued by their chief Vasil Iakimuk. The detained activists were taken to the police station, where they had to write explanatory notes.

On ***8 October*** the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) of the Council of Europe decided that the question put to vote at the referendum initiated by Aliaksandr Lukashenka contradicts European standards. On the basis of the comments of the experts Sergio Bartole (of Italy) and Mr Matthew Russell (of Ireland) the commission approved the conclusion that "the question submitted to the referendum raises a number of issues, in particular:

- It is partly in direct contradiction with the electoral law;
- It mixes an illicit privilege for a single person with an issue of great general importance;
- Its adoption would further aggravate the democratic deficit in a country already characterized by excessive powers of the President without adequate checks and balances;
- There are legitimate concerns as to whether a free and fair vote will be possible.

Venice Commission also points out that "some, but by no means all, of these concerns and objections could easily have been avoided if the President had limited the referendum to the constitutional issue, declaring his candidacy for a third term of office thereafter. That he has not done so, introducing in addition an obviously illegal personal element into the referendum question, shows an approach to the functioning of the state in direct contradiction with European democratic standards."

On ***8 October*** Piershamaiski Borough Court of Vitsiebsk found Valiery Shchukin guilty of insubordination to the police officers performing their official duties. According to the evidence of Valiery Shchukin, he did not resist the police officers detaining him on 7 October, on the contrary, the police officers themselves provoked what happened on Budaunikou Avenue. During the trial the testifying police officers did not deny it that a

large crowd had gathered around them as they were detaining the activist. The people were indignant at the actions of the police, so they forced Mr. Shchukin into the car as fast as they could, and took him to the police station. In Piershamaiski Borough Department of Police, they drew up a report registering his alleged refusal to follow the orders of the police. Valiantsina Kismiaroshkina, judge of Piershamaiski Court, sided with the police position and found Valiery Shchukin guilty. Because he had been repeatedly detained for distributing fly-sheets, Ms Kismiaroshkina gave 10 days of arrest to the oppositionist.

On ***8 October*** in Barysau Aliaksandr Kazakou was detained for distribution of the book “Occasional President”. He had to spend the night between 8 and 9 October at the preliminary detention cell of Barysau City Board of Internal Affairs. On 11 October he was sentenced to 10 days in jail upon Article 156 of the Code of Administrative Offences “disorderly conduct”

On ***8 October*** a case of censure used in the Minsk Palace of Arts became known. The painting by Aliaksei Marachkin, head of the Pahonia society, called «We are like Our Aliaksandr, or Lies-2004» was removed from the traditional exhibition of the Union of Artists «Autumn-2004». Marachkin himself tends to view the incident as his painting’s arrest (temporary detention) rather than a ban. «The painting I have painted is devoted to the elections and the referendum. I have compared two epochs. The 1950s, which are represented by a kind of documentary snapshot (where the journalist put up people at a polling station). This snapshot went through all newspapers. I have painted a two-dimensional picture of Belarus now: One Belarus is intimidated, suppressed and zombied by the media. The other Belarus does not want to live under such pressure, and wants to be free and independent».

On the ***night from 8 to 9 October*** the police detained Iury Chavusau for posting fly-sheets against the referendum. The detainee was taken to Minsk Savietski Borough Board of Internal Affairs, where the report for violation of article 143 of the Code of Administrative Offences —“violation of the rules of the accomplishment of settlements” and confiscated 250 anti-referendum fly-sheets. In two hours they let Chavusau go.

On ***10 October*** a pre-election and anti-referendum rally of the democratic opposition was staged in Minsk. The action was held under the slogan: «Say YES to Belarus, NO to Lukashenka!» The police confiscated seVieral streamers and arrested three action participants. The meeting in Banhalor Square, permitted by the city authorities to the deputy of the Chamber of Representatives Siarhiei Skrabiets, was attended by about 500 people. From the very beginning, the police had resorted to force.

They searched personal belongings of many people, looking for anti-referendum posters. For this reason, the Young Front activists Dzmitry Dashkievich and Barys Haretski became detained. They confiscated the streamer saying «NO to the third term!» and took the guys to the police station. Uladzimir Karpukhin, a PCB member, was also detained. The rock group Palace was barred from performing at the rally. The special police also confiscated the large streamer saying «Yes to Belarus, No to Lukashenka!».

On ***10 October*** in Homiel around 500 people took part in the rally against the third term for the President. The city executive committee allowed the action to be held near the Hearing-Impaired Center in Iubilieinaia Street. In the rally staged under the slogan «Yes to Belarus! No to Lukashenka!» the candidates representing the coalition Five+ Alies Karnienka, Iury Varoniezhtsau, Viktar Khomich and others addres¬sed the people. During the rally the book by P.Sharamiet and S.Kalinkina «the Occasional president» was handed out. After the rally the police detained the car of the UCP member Uladzimir Katsora. He was made to go to Chyhunachny Department of Internal Affairs, where they sear¬ched the car, looking for the book. However, the police only found a filing of old newspapers.

On ***11 October*** Ministry of Justice dismissed the UCP appeal regarding the dissolution of the Vasniatsouski unit of the Party in Zavodski Borough of Minsk. The party leadership believes that this unit was liquidated on 10 September 2004 illegally because «according to the information available to the UCP press-service, on 10 September in the morning the Justice Department passed the liquidation ruling, performing the checkup itself only in the evening of the same day». As a result of these actions, Paviel Kazlouski, the first Minister of Defense of inde¬pendent Belarus, a potential candidate in the Vasniatsouskaia Electoral District, was not registered. The protest against the actions of the Justice Department of the Minsk City Executive Committee was filed with the Ministry of Justice that, however, refused to review the appeal because the party member, whose apartment was where the party unit was registered, allegedly did not have a separate entrance.

On ***11 October*** the under-age Viachaslau Andreieu was detained for distributing fly-sheets. The student of Vitsiebsk secondary school #6 and activist of the youth club «Seventh Facet» was distributing fly-sheets urging to say «no» at the referendum. Viachaslau Andreieu put the fly-sheets in the mailboxes. The police officers of Kastrychnitski Borough Department were waiting for the boy outside, then detained him and took him to the police station. All of the fly-sheets he had (se¬-vie¬ral hundreds of copies) were confiscated. The police also drew up a report registering the distribution of printed material without the imprint (a violation allegedly committed by the boy). After

seVieral hours the boy was warned that they would report his violation to the juvenile delinquency commission, and then was released.

On ***11 October*** Vitsiebsk entrepreneur who asked not to mention his name, was to have taken 8 000 copies of the book “Occasional President” by Paviel Sharamiet and Sviatlana Kalinkina from Moscow to Vitsebsk. To his mind, his car was watched, because as soon as he stopped to make some trifle car repairs near the village of Babinichy, the police from Vitsiebsk District Police Board and the department of economical crimes came there. They detained him and confiscated the books. The entrepreneur hoped they would either return the books or at least draw a report for their confiscation. The police refuse to do it, but many policemen have already read the book.

On ***11 October*** policeman detained 2 members of students’ NGO “Belarusian Students’ Association” (Zadzinochanne Belaruskikh Studentau) for distribution of leaflets with a request not to participate in the preliminary elections. Siarzhuk Siemianuk and Vasil Liepiesh were arrested on October 11 in the yard of the house where the office of the organization is situated. That was the policeman responsible for defending Latvian Embassy. He called for a patrolling car. In students’ bags around 200 leaflets were found on which it was written with capital letters: “DO NOT BE HEARDED!” as well as the request not to participate in the preliminary elections. The policemen explained to the youngsters that they will not let these leaflets get to the students. The students were brought to the police station of the Savietski district in Minsk. They are accused of administrative violation (it is most likely that they will be accused on the grounds of Article 172.3 of the Code on Administrative Violations – distribution of printed matter without the date-line.

On ***12 October*** the court refused to consider the complaint of Volha Zavadskaia about the actions of the officials of the republican Prose¬cutor”s Office. The appeal of the mother of disappeared politician about restart of the investigation on the grounds of “newly found circumstances” was taken by Sheiman personally. Recently the mother of Dzmitry Zavadski, an ORT cameraman kidnapped in July 2000, received a reply from the court of central district of Minsk to her complaint about the actions of the officials from the Prosecutor’s office. In her complaint Volha Zavadskaia asked the court to make the employees of the Prosecutor’s office to give her a motivated reply to her written request to start an investigation of her son’s case based on the grounds of “newly found circumstances” in connection with the speech of Aliaksandr Lukashenka. On July 20, 2004 during a press-conference Lukashenka declared that he has “some documents” and if he announces them now “Zavadski’s case will turn into anti-case”. The Prosecutor did not

react anyway to the request of Zavadski's mother. A reply came from the court – a decision of a judge of Central district in Minsk Hanchar S.V. which says "... as the applicant questions the actions of officials of the Prosecutor's office of Republic of Belarus (…) the complaint cannot be considered because of lack of jurisdiction. In the republican Prosecutor's Office Volha Ryhorauna was said that there would be no reply to her complaint as it was taken by Viktar Sheiman, the General Prosecutor, personally and he did not give any order on this complaint.

On ***12 October*** Ministry of Information abolished the order to stop the activity of newspaper Rehianalnaya hazeta. Co-founder and senior editor of the edition Aliaksandr Mantsevich does not exclude that it is connected with lots of complaints sent by the readers to the Ministry of Justice. In the order of Minister Rusakievich about abolishing of the previous order his decision is not motivated. At the same time Mantsevich informs Belarusian Journalists Association that "recently a representative of Ministry of Information made a phone call to the editorial office and informed that they received piles of letters of protest from readers concerning the abeyance of the newspaper. Besides, the senior editor initiated collection of signatures in support of the newspaper and abolishing of the order. (According to BJA he collected 235 signatures during the first day). Aliaksandr Mantsevich thinks that one more reason why the Ministry abolished its decision could be operative reaction of the newspaper to the claims of the Ministry. The editorial team submitted all necessary documents to the Ministry to change the registration certificate and paid registration fee at once.

On ***12 October*** the International Association of Newspapers and the International Forum of Editors sent a letter to Aliaksandr Lukashenka, in which they expressed their concern over the Belarusian authorities' recent decisions to close down independent periodicals. On 5 October the Minister of Information of Belarus Uladzimir Rusakievich suspended the newspaper Nedelya for three months. No reasons justifying the temporary closure of the periodical were named. The International Association of Newspapers and the International Forum of Editors expressed their concern over the Nedelya closure, viewing it as a part of the campaign the authorities launched to suppress criticism during the parliamentary elections and the referendum. «Over the past months a total of five periodicals were either suspended or liquidated», says the appeal. Apart from the Nedelya, these newspapers include the Rehiy¬analnaia Hazieta, the Navinki, the Novaya Gazieta Smorgoni, and the Rabochaia Salidarnasts. The International Association of the News¬papers and the International Forum of Editors recommend sending their protests to the President of Belarus to remind him that the closure of the Nedelya and other periodicals is an obvious violation of the freedom of conscience

guaranteed by a number of international treaties, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The international journalist organizations urged the Belarusian leader to cancel the closure of the periodicals and take all the steps needed to ensure that Belarus honors the international standards of the freedom of expression.

On ***12 October*** a citizen of Hrodna, Hienadz Skrabouski, was arrested for 7 days for holding a picket in the center of Hrodna against live-long ruling of Lukashenka. He commented that he "was made to go out for the picket the impudent agitation campaign in the state Mass Media".

On ***12 October*** Sviatlana Mianzhynskaia, Chair of Vitsebsk-Horki Electoral District Committee, refused to provide information to the journalist of the independent newspaper Vitsiebski Kuryier Uladzimir Zhyhulou. At first, Mianzhynskaia agreed to the conversation but then said she will not answer the journalist's questions and, generally, «does not want to have anything to do with the press». «Until the Central Election Committee passes a ruling, I will say nothing», said the com-mittee chair. The topic of the interview was to have been the committee's decision to deregister the candidate Paviel Sieviaryniets after he had delivered a speech on the regional radio. Mianzhynskaia reminded that the deregistered candidate filed an appeal against the committee actions with the procurator's office, and let the journalist understand that she was very unhappy about this action.

On ***13 October*** Minister of Sport and Tourism Iury Sivakou was not allowed to take part in the conference of the Ministers of Sport of the European Countries in Budapest on 14-15 October.

On ***13 October*** the administrative committee of Chyhunachny Borough of Homiel issued a warning to Alies Iausieienka, chair of the Homiel branch of BHC, whose car was stopped by the traffic police on 6 October, which then confiscated the print-run of the anti-referendum bulletin.

On ***13 October*** Mikhail Paulau, an activist of the Human Rights Center Viasna, was detained by the policemen in Vitsiebsk on October 13, 2004. The activist of Viasna was detained for distribution of leaflets which contained information concerning the issue of the referendum. He was brought to the police-station where a statement of the case was drawn up. Mikhail Paulau was accused of violation of article 172-3 (distribution of printed materials without data line). During personal examination 12 pills of "Metionil" which is freely sold at the drug stores were found with him. They do not contain any strong narcotic and appear to be a kind of extract from a usual curd. No matter that the

policemen got explanations from the head drug store a statement was drawn on the case of requisition of the medical substance which was sent for the expertise. The statement of administrative violation was sent for consideration of the administrative commission. While his staying in the police station Mikhail Paulau heard the officer on duty captain Abramovich was giving an order to the policemen at the electoral districts: to inform him immediately about voters who come to the electoral districts.

On ***13 October*** the activist of the United Civil Party Andrei Koziel, was detained at the metro station Niamiha. The court of Tsentralny Borough of Minsk passed a ruling inflicting 4 days of administrative arrest for «disorderly conduct on the activist». A.Koziel was sent to the special distribution center to serve his sentence. But, as he was informing the UCP office of the detention, Andrei said that he had not done anything that could be viewed as an administrative offence.

On ***13 October*** Information Minister Uladzimir Rusakievich warned the Bobruiski Kurier newspaper. The editorial board of Bobruiski Kurier learned about the warning from the Ministry’s letter. The edition is accu¬sed of publishing ads of licensed businesses “having received no license confirmation from advertisers” (Art 30 of the Law on Press). According to Anatol Sanatsienka, Bobruiski Kuryier editor-in-chief, the Ministry sanctions are the result of the street poll of Babruisk residents about their attitude to referendum (2 votes “for”, and 5 – “against”). Besides that, the newspaper regularly criticized the local authorities. Anatol Sanatsienka said that he would try to appeal the warning.

On ***14 October*** Belarusian Ministry of Justice temporarily gave up their claims to Belarusian Helsinki Committee. The Ministry of Justice practically admitted that no second appeal for abolishing of BHC will be forwarded to the Supreme Court. In mid-September an appeal to abolish BHC was sent to the Supreme Court. But the Supreme Court forwarded the appeal to the Ministry of Justice for developing and gave 2 weeks for that. Even more time have past but new appeal has not appeared in the court. In private talks the officials of the Ministry of Justice admit that they “exceeded” possible claims to BHC but they are not going to announce it publicly.

On ***14 October*** Belarusian Publishing House refused to print next issue of the edition of Central Committee of PCB Tovarisch. Firstly, the editorial team said that the institution does not have enough “technical possibilities” to print the issue and than informed that the management of the newspaper should have forwarded the request to publish the newspaper with bigger circulation in advance. On October 13 the editorial team ordered a 30000 circulation of the newspaper instead of usual 7000. 23 000 were planned to be

freely distributed. On October 13 the publishing house accepted this order without any questions. But already in the morning on October 14 the senior editor of publication Siarhiei Vazniak was said that when ordering a bigger circulation a special request form should be submitted. In this issue of the newspaper the text of “straight line” of the candidate, the leader of PCB, Siarhiei Kaliakin with the readers on the topic of Referendum should have been printed. The main slogan of the issue – “In favor of Belarus and against Lukashenka!”. Mr. Vazniak is sure that the newspaper was denied after the publication house read the plot of the issue. And explanation that the publication house does not “possess enough technical appliances” he considers to be baseless at all after the same publication house printed 863000 samples of “Sovietskaya Belorussiya”.

On ***14 October*** TV reporters of a Polish information group of TV channel 1 were detained and still are kept at the police station in Baranavichy. The polish TV reporters today have arrived into Belarus to reflect the events connected to the elections and the Referendum. In the night at the Belarusian-Polish boarder they were met by the Consul. They were on their way to Minsk to get the accreditation for which they sent documents to the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in advance. But on their way they decided to stop in Baranavichy. They met a UCP candidate to the Deputy – Siarhiei Andrushchanka as well as members of Human Rights Center “Spring” and some other local democratic activists there. After the meeting the journalists together with local branch of Viasna Siarhiei Housha went outside the office to make some photos. In the street they were already awaited by three policemen (one of them was a colonel). They demanded accreditation. The journalists started to explain that they are on their way to Minsk to get it but they were not listened but taken to the police car and brought to the police station.

On ***14 October*** the Procurator Office of Minsk refused to institute legal proceedings against anti-Semite publishers. The Prosecutor refused to institute legal proceedings against a publishing company “Pravaslaunaya initsiativa” (“Orthodox initiative”). Belarusian union of Jewish associations applied to the Prosecutors office with such a request in March 2004. The organization asked to institute proceedings against the firm “Pravoslavnaya initsiativa” for distribution of information that unleashed religious and national confrontation and which also were directed to offend national feelings of the Jews. The union attracted attention to the book “War on the meanness rules” published by “Pravo¬slavnaya initsiativa”. The chairperson of the union of Jewish organization in Belarus, Iakau Basin called the refusal of the Prosecutor “to be a rather tendentious which does not reflect the real situation in the country in connection with the problem of

anti-Semitism". The management of the union are going to contest the decision of Minsk Prosecutor in higher institutions.

On ***15 October*** Information Ministry suspended Mestnaya Gazeta (Vaukavysk) for 1 Month. The authorities accuse the editors of a number of violations of the Law on Press and Other Mass Media. Andrei Shantarovich, senior editor of the newspaper, thinks the edition has been suspended because of the referendum and election. He promises, soon the readers will get the newspaper under another title. In the suspension order Information Minister Uladzimir Rusakievich blames the newspaper for spreading untrue information about suspension of Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni. Mestnaya Gazeta wrote that the Ministry's decision to suspend Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni was illegal. Vaukavysk newspaper is also accused of publishing ads of businesses which are licensed. The Minister also thinks that the newspaper should change its status from regional to district one. That's why the newspaper will be suspended for 1 month.

On ***15 October*** the police caught Iury Chavusau near the stand with pro-Lukashenka agitation posters while he was pasting an anti-Luka poster. The police took him to Tsentralny police station and reported violation of Art 143 of the Code of Administrative Offences. Six anti-Lukashenka posters were confiscated.

On ***15 October*** Hrodna police started hunting down the volunteers of the Independent Institute of the Socio-Economic and Political Research that is conducting exit-polls. Aliaksei Saliei was detained and taken to Leninski Borough Department of Internal Affairs. The police visited the apartments of the other activists, demanding they should give up their mobile telephones. The formal reason for persecuting the volunteers was anonymous allegation that the mobile phones they were using had been stolen. Only late in the evening Aliaksei Salei, a coordinator of the exit-poll conducted in Hrodna, was released. The special service agents who identified themselves as police officers of the Minsk Department for Combating Organized Crime attempted to recruit Aliaksei Salei, but he turned down the collaboration offer.

On ***15 October*** the U.S. Embassy made a comment on the number of programs shown on the Belarusian State Television, which aimed to present in the negative light the activity of the US embassy staff working in Belarus. In particular, the embassy dismisses the allegations voiced in the program «In the Center of Attention» that argued that the American employees were involved with illegal or subversive activities. Obviously, these biased programs were created to produce a distorted and negative image of the United States, turn the people of Belarus against the USA, their people and the policy. The United States welcomes critical opinions and open dialog, however,

insinuation and attacks on the dignity of the US diplomats are absolutely inadmissible. The United States Embassy favors strong friendly relations between our countries. The embassy employees have always acted and will continue to act in the spirit of professional and personal dignity and in accordance with the laws of the United States and Belarus.

On ***16 October*** the Procurator's Office of Minsk initiated criminal proceedings over the press-conference of the possible violations during the voting. The representatives of the initiative «For Fair Elections» and the leaders of the opposition parties demonstrated the journalists the already completed protocols of the district election commissions, and summary tables for the district featuring a breakdown of the votes per precincts. Copies of the prepared protocols and tables simultaneously got into the hands of Anatol Fiodarau, an activist of the initiative «For fair elections», and the PCB Leader Siarhiei Kaliakin. All the protocols featured results in favor of A.Lukashenka and the candidates nominated by the authorities. On 15 October Procurator of Minsk Mikalai Kulik gave the following response to the press-conference in the interview with the Belarusian Television Company: «Its participants spread the originally mendacious information that defames the President of the Republic of Belarus and other officials, and concerns the forthcoming referendum and elections». Procurator Kulik added that «the materials contain features of crimes» by terms of two articles of the Criminal Code: libel and libel on the President. For this reason, the Procurator's Office of Minsk launched criminal proceedings by terms of these articles.

On ***16 October*** the Vitsiebsk activist of the Conservative Christian Party Uladzimir Plieshchanka and Barys Khamaida were arrested to 10 days for a picket staged outside Vitsiebsk District Executive Committee. Barys Khamaida only held a white sheet of paper with a black square painted on it. The explanations were as follows: «Our life will be as black if we vote yes at the referendum, or «This is the color of our fate under the new elected representatives». The police thought this was as good a reason for taking the oppositionists first to Chyhunachny Borough of Internal Affairs, and then to the District Court. The police officers were the only witnesses in both court hearings. Both oppositionists got 10 days of arrest to serve in a temporary detention center.

On ***16 October*** Strangers in civil clothes demanded from Czech journalist Miroslav Karas to erase his video tape. Miroslav Karas is a reporter of Czech TV, accredited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to cover Belarusian referendum and parliamentary elections. The incident occurred near the building of Central Election Commission after the journalist recorded an interview with BPF member Alies Mikhalievich. Registration of the

BPF candidate was cancelled a couple of days before the Election Day. According to Miroslav Karas, strangers who did not introduce themselves did not allow him to video tape the CEC building, took him inside and demanded to erase the recorded material. Miroslav Karas refused to execute their orders. They let him go only when he stated he would apply to Czech Embassy for assistance.

On ***16 October*** Bykhau police detained the Polish journalist Hanna Harasimovich. Ms Hanna, who represents the «cultural informator», visited the electoral districts of Bykhau district together with the group of support of Kiryl Sharapkin, a candidate for Parliament representing the United Civil Party. At the polling stations, Hanna Harasimovich asked how many people voted early, which seriously unnerved the members of the election commissions. Police officers came to the poling station on the Bykhau District Hospital premises and suggested that Ms Hanna come with them to the police station. They asked the journalist who she was, where she came from, what kind of a visa she had and why she was interested in the voting. The Bykhau police kept the Polish journalists for more than an hour.

On ***16 October*** in Smarhon six OSCE observers were detained in the electoral district, where Zinaida Bandarenka, the People's Artiste of Belarus, was running for Parliament. They were questioned in the local police department for an hour.

On ***16 October*** young people with black arm-bands came out to Kastrychnitskaia Square. Having formed a line, they unfolded the issue of the Sovietskaya Belorussia newspaper that said «Vote!» on the first page and pretended they were reading carefully. The action participants also held in their hands red-green flags with the inscriptions saying «NO» and «Long Live Belarus». Thus, the flash-mob participants wanted to remind the people of the danger of the referendum on amending the Constitution. The special officers detained Makar Vauchok (under-age) and Alieh Larychau (student) because they had black arm-bands, which testified to their participation in the flash-mob). After searching the detained activists' bags, the special police officers found anti-president fly-sheets. Vauchok and Larychau were detained to the Board of Internal Affairs of Tsentralny Borough.

On ***16 October*** in Vitsiebsk photographer for the newspaper Vitsebski kurier Aliaksei Vronski was beaten. It happened at about 8 p.m. in the courtyard of the house in Gagarin Street, where the journalist lives. The first blow was delivered from behind (with brass-knuckles, as is believed). A.Vronski himself, who used to be a good sportsman, believes that the attacker acted professionally. He did not restrict himself to the beating, and took the photographer's camera and all the accessories together with the bag. In the same

evening, the man went to the police, but the law enforcement agencies failed to find the criminal right away.

On ***17 October*** Internet users in Belarus encountered the following problem: a number of sites that provide the most important public and political information online turned out to be inaccessible. The «blocked» web-sites were Charter-97, Radio Liberty, Human Rights Center Viasna, and the United Civil Party. Early in the morning the Internet-resources operated in the ordinary mode, however, after 12 a.m. the sites could not be loaded. The web-masters have no doubts that the problems have the same origins. Technically, such obstacles can be created only by the national telecommunications operator Beltelecom, which has a monopoly over Internet access rights in Belarus. The team of the blocked site www.charter97.org made a special statement on this occasion. «We declare that the attempts undertaken by the authorities to hinder the unobstructed spread of information on the Internet will fail. You can block seVieral web-sites within the country, but the Belarusian regime is in no position to paralyze the leading international and Russian Internet media», says the statement. The Internet-resources team also appeals to the world's media to continue with an all-round coVierage of the events in Belarus.

On ***17 October*** in Minsk police officers in plain clothes attempted to detain a group of journalists from the Russian Ren-TV company in the polling station #579 in the city district Urucha.

On ***17 October*** in Minsk the police detained Paviel Sharamiet, the head of the special project department of the ORT Television company, who was then taken to the District Department of Internal Affairs of the Savietski Borough. The detention occurred immediately after the fight initiated by unidentified young people in plain clothes with P.Sharamiet. P.Sharamiet was accused of disorderly conduct. The journalist believes the incident is directly connected with the press-conference on the preliminary results of the elections and the referendum staged in Minsk. Paviel Sharamiet was taken to the department of the neuro-surgery of the 9th clinic, with suspected cranio-cerebral trauma. Hienadz Hliebchyk, the head of the information and public relations in the Foreign Ministry, believes the incident with the Russian TV company journalist Paviel Sharamiet is an «ordinary» situation. The Ministry is sure that the journalists was the first to attack the young people, and claim they know nothing of Mr. Sharamiet's trauma's origin. According to the Foreign Ministry, in the evening on 17 October in the courtyard of house #53 in Skaryna Avenue, Sharamiet was approached by two young people (workmen born on 1981 and 1982) and asked for a light. According to Mr. Hliebchyk,

P.Sharamiet behaved very aggressively, used bad language in response and hit one of the young men. The young men started calling for the police, which soon arrived to take all the three of them to Savietski Borough Department of Internal Affairs. When asked where the journalist got his trauma from, H.Hliebchyk said that «he himself would like to find out». The information department head said the Department of Internal Affairs released the two young men because they «did not commit anything in violation of the law according to the report produced», while deciding to keep P.Sharamiet in the distribution center before the court ruling because «he is not a citizen of the Republic of Belarus». H.Hliebchyk said that the trial over Sharamiet was to occur right away but he complained of a headache so was taken to hospital from the Akrestsina Street detention center. A.Frolov, the secretary of Russia's ambassador to Belarus, said that the embassy keeps the situation under control. According to the secretary, the Embassy representatives contacted the Minister of Internal Affairs of Belarus Uladzimir Navumau who told them that Sharamiet had been detained for taking part in a fight, and that the trial over him will occur on 20 October. According to Mr. Frolov, P.Sharamiet himself did not seek help from the Russian embassy. The embassy representative will attend the court hearings only after P.Sharamiet has applied with a corresponding request. Article 156 of the Code of Administrative Offences, which is used as a ground for bringing the journalist to account, provides for arrest of 15 days, a fine of up to two basic units, or correctional labor for 1 to 2 months.

On ***17 October*** Aliaksei Liaukovich, the Zubr activist, who was distributing fly-sheets calling on people to come on 18 October to Kastrychnitskaia Square and voice their protest against the falsified results of the elections and the referendum, was detained in Minsk. The police made a report registering violation of Article 167-1 CAO of Belarus disruption of the order for holding mass actions).

On ***17 October*** the observer Mikalai Labanau was detained in Mahilou. He was nominated by the BPF Adradzhennie to observe in the district election committee #109 of Mahilou-Kastrychnitski electoral district #73. Mr. Labanau was in the polling station #109, where he observed the voting. Because the observers are placed where they cannot see what is happening to the ballot boxes, Mr. Labanau reported his corresponding comment to the Commission Head Halina Kalinovich. She, however, did not take any moves to remedy the situation. OSCE observers who soon came to the station were told about the situation by M.Labanau. After the OSCE observers left, police came to the station (Lieutenant Siarhiei Uladzimiravich Khonin, Lieutenant Atrsiom Aliaksandravich Mishernik, Viktar Fiodaravich Antoshkin), detained Mr. Labanau and took

him to Kastrychnitski Department of Internal Affairs. M. Labanau was kept for three hours in the Department of Internal Affairs, and then was released.

On ***17 October*** the head of the Working Group on Belarus of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Uta Zapf came to Minsk as an official observer of the Parliamentary election. When she attempted to come to a polling station, she was pulled out by the head of the polling station election committee. According to Uta Zapf, her colleagues and she also faced with the reluctance of members of election committees to answer their questions. She said that Aliaksandr Lukashenka made it impossible to observe the election and the referendum according to OSCE standards.

On ***18 October*** the official Minsk again surprised the whole world: first, by the improbable results of the referendum and elections to the Parliament (event President Lukashenka called them «overwhelming»), and then by the brutal treatment of the hundreds of people who came out to Kastrychnitskaia Square of the Belarusian capital to express their protest against the mass falsifications that occurred in the polling stations. Around five thousand people gathered at Kastrychnitskaia Square. At 6 p.m. they had watched the declaration of the official results of the referendum on a large screen installed on the square. «Disgrace!» chanted the people summing up what they have seen. By 6.30 p.m. the action participants formed a column, hoisting above it European Union flags and traditional national white-red-white ones. Chanting «Long Live Belarus!» and «Lukashenka, you lost!», the people moved toward Inde-pendence Square and the House of Government. Special police blocked the road in front the demonstrators. Then they proceeded to detaining and beating the people, forcing them into buses. The column was moving to the building of the Presidential Administration. A streamer saying «No to the third term!». «Away with Lukashenka!», «Resign!», chanted the action participants. A meeting occurred at the square outside the Palace of the Republic. Then the letter by the former President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Gavel and the Czech Committee for Free Belarus that supported the democratic forces of Belarus and its people in their fight for freedom was read. At 7.30 p.m. the column of the demonstrators started moving to the KGB building because it became known that that was where the detained people were being kept, including one of the Zubr youth movement leaders Iauhien Afnahiel. «KGB, Give the People Back!» went over the column. What was meant was that in the past few years famous politicians, a businessman and a journalist have disap¬peared in Belarus. Lieanid Ieryn, KGB Chair, went out to the meeting participants. He refused to talk with the people, saying that he could answer journalists' questions in his study. Together with seVieral journa-lists, Paviel Sieviaryniets, the Young Front leader entered the building. They talked about those who disappeared. L.Ieryn did not disclose

any substantial information but his words «There will be a time and we'll know the truth», sounded aphoristic. Meanwhile, the demonstrator got back to Kastrychnitskaia Square. At their demand, Iauhien Afnahiel was released. The other arrested people had to spend the night in the special detention center.

On ***19 October*** in the evening another action of protest against the falsified results of the referendum and the elections was staged at Kastrychnitskaia Square in Minsk. The special police cracked down on the participants in a still more harsh manner. More than 50 people were arrested, including those under the legal age. SeVieral hundreds, including journalists and party leaders, were beaten. Chair of the United Civil Pa-rty Anatol Liabiedzka received severe cranio-cerebral injuries and was hospitalized. «The special police beat me unconscious», he said afterwards. Iury Svirko, a correspondent of the Belarusian service Radio Liberty, suffered from the actions of a presidential security guard. Siarhiei Hryts, a press photographer for Associated Press, was detained temporarily. After the police seized and got inside the Patio Pizza restaurant the UCP leader Anatol Liabiedzka, the cameramen Kans-tantsin Marozau and Uladzimir Kostsin of the television companies NTV and REN-TV managed to break inside the building. Inside there were a lot of special police officers who must have entered the restaurant through the backdoor. The special police got the journalists down on the floor and did not «let them raise their heads». Though they mostly hit the cameras, the journalists also got bodily injuries. U.Kostsin said that he had managed to cover his camera and so protect it against damage, while the larger NTV camera was all but smashed into fragments. Then the journalists were thrown outside. According to the witnesses, K.Marozau's face was bleeding. Iury Svirko, the Radio Liberty correspondent, was recording an interview with Mr. Marozau, when he saw a presidential security guard standing behind. The Radio Liberty correspondent asked him to share his comments on the situation, however, instead of getting an answer, Siarhiei got a blow in the stomach. The people standing around attempted to stop the guard, but he hit one of the girls and ran off toward the Presidential Residence. Yu.Svirko prepared a complaint to General Procurator Viktar Sheiman, requiring a criminal action by terms of «illegal resistance to the journalist activities». The Liberty correspondent added that it was this presidential security guard (Siarhiei) who controlled the activities of the press outside the house of Deputy Valiery Fralou during the hunger-strike and also did not let the journalists attend the sitting of the Chamber of Representa¬tives, where they discussed the amendments to the Election Code proposed by the deputies on hunger-strike. Then in June 2004 this very guard deleted the recordings from Iury Svirko's Dictaphone right in front of Uta Zapf, the head of the Working Group on Belarus of the Parliamentary Assembly of OSCE, and then assisted the removal of the journalist from the Parliament premises. It became known

that the Belarusian TV company did not allow all Russian journalists to transfer their footage to Moscow. Meanwhile all of the Belarusian TV channels degraded the Belarusian opposition and the «dishonest» Russian journalists.

On ***19 October***

- to conduct additional checkup of the case evidence;
- to check the identities of the two people detained for assaulting P.Sharamiet but released later from Savietski Department of Internal Affairs;
- evaluate the legality of the actions undertaken by the officers of Savietski Department of Internal Affairs of Minsk, who, instead of helping the beaten journalist (a citizen of the Russian Federation) detained him and sent him to the special detention center».

On ***19 October*** the Collegium for Criminal Cases of Hrodna Regional Court upheld the verdict passed in the case against the Chair of the national strike committee of the businessmen Valiery Lievanieuski and his deputy Aliaksandr Vasilieu. This means that within days the busines-smen's leaders will be transferred from Hrodna remand prison to a correctional facility.

On ***19 October*** the journalist Paviel Sharamiet was discharged from the 9th hospital of Minsk. A conference of special doctors confirmed the cranio-cerebral injury, refusing, however, further stay in the in-patient clinic to Mr.Sharamiet. They said that Russia's citizens can only count on emergency help, which Mr. Sharamiet already received.

On ***20 October*** the trial over the Pervy Kanal journalist Paviel Sharamiet due to take place on that day did not occur. The judge that was supposed to hear the case against Sharamiet unexpectedly refused to take part in the hearing, after which the Chair of Savietski Borough Court of Minsk informed P.Sharamiet that the court did not have any documents relating to his case. In the morning on 20

NOVEMBER

On ***1 November*** the Belarusian Association of Journalists addressed Information Minister Uladzimir Rusakievich with an open letter, requesting to cancel the order about suspension of the Mestnaya Gazeta. The editor-in-chief of this independent newspaper has been on hunger strike for already 13 days. BAJ calls on the minister to meet with its leadership and editors of independent printed editions in order to discuss the situation in the sphere of mass media. According to BAJ, since the beginning of 2004 the Information Ministry suspended 19 independent newspapers. "Such strict measures were grounded on violations, which in some cases were not proved by anything", — highlights the appeal, - "Even if some of the violation really existed they could be easily corrected". Also, violations mentioned in the order to suspend the Mestnaya Gazeta, "are an insufficient reason for closure, although temporary, of the newspaper which is awaited by 8.5 readers", BAJ believes. "In general, we are against extra-judicial suspension of newspapers. We think that such decisions… violate the international legal obligations of the Republic of Belarus in the sphere of the freedom of speech and hinder implementation of the rights to free receipt and delivery of information, declared in the Constitution", — says the appeal of BAJ. « Publishers and journalists of independent newspapers do not ask for and do not expect economic support from the authorities. They just want to work without being hindered». The authors of the appeal stress that journalists of the Mestnaya Gazeta, left without work by the Minister's order, are ready to join their senior editor Andrei Shantarovich in the hunger strike.

On ***1 November*** it became known that the Procurator's Office trans-ferred to the Procurator's Office of Minsk the appeal of the Board of the Belarusian Association of Journalists regarding the illegal actions of the police with respect to Paviel Sharamiet. The official letter sent to the BAJ by the Procurator of the Department P.Radzivonau says this. On 19 October the Public Association Belarusian Association of Journalists sent an appeal to the General Procurator of Belarus Viktar Sheiman and the Minister of Internal Affairs Uladzimir Navumau regarding the beating and detention of Paviel Sharamiet, the Russian Pervy Kanal journalist. The organization demands that an additional investigation into the materials of this case be conducted, the identity of the two individuals detained for assaulting the journalists but later released by Savietski BBIA be verified, the legality of the actions by the employees of the Savietski BBIA of Minsk be evaluated (instead of helping the beaten journalist they detained him and sent to the special detention center in Akrestsina Street.

On ***1 November*** head of Hrodna branch of Belarusian Association of Journalists, reporter of the closed down newspaper Pahonia Paviel Mazheika was sentenced to 7

days in jail by Leninski court of Hrodna. He was found guilty of violation of Article 167-1 part 1 of the Code of Administrative Offences (violation of the order of organizing or conducting meetings, rallies, street marches, pickets, etc.). After the sentence was pronounced, the journalist went on a protest hunger strike. Mazheika's trial started on 27 October after 3 p.m. two and a half hours before that he was detained by police in the center of Hrodna. Mazheika was de-tained for participation in the picket carried out by five Hrodna journalists on October 4. The journalist will serve his sentence in the detention prison of the Leninski Department of Internal Affairs.

On ***1 November*** Svislach court was to try Viktar Sazonau (head of Hrodna regional branch of the Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada), Siarhiei Malchyk (head of Hrodna regional branch of Belarusian People"s Front), and Vadzim Saranchukou (BPF activist). They were detained on October 31 during commemoration march of Kalinouski brothers (they marched in Svislach town with national white-red-white flags). The trial was scheduled for 10 a.m. but started at 4 p.m. During the trial it turned out that reports for "usage of unregistered symbols" drawn up on October 31 had disappeared. Instead, the police presented reports under Art 167-1 part 1 of the Code of Administrative Offences "violation of the order of organizing and conducting mass events". However, these reports have been drawn up with numerous errors, police witnesses made many mistakes in the testimony, and "offenders" appealed for a lawyer. In conjunction with that the trial was postponed.

On ***1 November*** the BPF Party received a letter from the Ministry of Justice, which demands that the branch structures of the party should change their legal addresses from 1 February 2005. The ministry states that it is illegal to have legal address of political parties in private flats if the flats have no separate exit and therefore demands from the BPF to change the legal addresses for a number of its units. The letter was signed by the Minister of Justice Viktar Halavanau and dated 18 October 2004. Otherwise the ministry promises to "react in conformity with the legislation", which can mean liquidation of the party. The overwhelming majority of units of democratic political parties and NGOs are registered in flats. Now they have to look for other legal addresses, which is quite complicated. This demand of the Ministry of Justice touches about 90% of party units and it is physically impossible to execute it till the stated deadline. The head of the BPF Party Vintsuk Viachorka thinks that this demand is politically motivated. – It means that Lukashenka's order "not to leave a stone standing". It is an attempt to destroy political parties from below. However, we are not afraid of it. BPF existed in unregistered state and if it happens, we will follow the promptings of conscience".

On ***3 November*** Andrei Shantarovich is the senior editor of the “Mestnaya Gazeta”, issued in the tow Vaukavysk. He is keeping the hunger-strike against the three-month suspension of his newspaper by the authorities for fifteen days already. Andrei Shantarovich has already lost 15 kilos. The Ministry of Information doesn’t react to his demand to set aside its order and let the newspaper be printed.

On ***3 November*** Tsentralny Borough Court of Minsk started admi-nistrative trial against the Krishna society in Minsk. The inspector of public security department, captain Nestsiarovich accused them in liturgical services in a private house, which is allegedly prohibited by the law. The policeman referred to absence of permission of Minsk Tsentralny Borough Executive Committee. The members of the society explained that they have gathered in the private house for 14 years already and the legal address of the society is there. Till this moment the authorities had no pretensions to them. They think that this trial can bring the liqui¬dation of the society.

On ***3 November*** the Brest City Executive Committee prohibited an antifascist picket. Belarusian Social Democratic Party decided to hold an antifascist picket in the “Budaunik” stadium on 6 November. However, Brest City Executive Committee refused to authorize the picket referring to the fact that the application for the permission didn’t describe the measures for provision of public order and security, medical service and cleaning of the territory after the action.

On ***3 November*** it became known that the state-run printers Mas-tatskaia litaratura decided not to print a collection of stories by Vasil Bykau in 8 volumes. What has happened to the book conceived by his friends was predicted by Vasil Bykau three years ago, when they started working on the first volume. The author did not believe it that the state-owned printers would print a collection of his works given the current conditions. And he was not wrong. Uladzislau Machulski, director of Mastatskaia litaratura, advertised the first volume of the planned 8 volume collection in the presence of Vasil Bykau at the international book exhibition in Frankfurt-am-Main back in 2002, but the printing of the first volume was repeatedly called off. Nonetheless, the first, fully ready volume was never printed.

On ***3 November*** the judge of Hrodna Leninski Borough Court Vikto-ryia Kulakowskaya ruled to exact 20 basic units ($553) from Natallia Makushyna and the same sum from her husband Anatol Makushyn. The judge found them guilty of violation of part 1 of article #167-1 of the Code of Administrative Offences (violation of the order of orga¬nization or holding of assemblies, street processions and pickets, etc.). Natallia Makushyna stated that such violent decision is an evidence of the intentions of the

authorities to revive "Bolshevik regime" and smother the liberty of speech in the country. The police refused to admit to the trial the press, who came there with badges "Set Mazheika Free!", making them to hide them. Natallia and Anatol Makushyns were detained on 29 October at Minsk Leninski Borough Court during the trial of the journalist Paviel Mazheika. The detainees took part in the unauthorized picket for which Paviel Mazheika was sentenced to 7 days in jail (his prison term hasn't ended yet). The reason for the picket was the lawless verdict to the senior editor of the "Birzha Informatsii" newspaper Aliena Raubietskaia, who was charged with distribution of the information that was considered to be insulting for the president. The journalists went along the pavement of Savietskaya Street, holding sheets of paper with the words "Jour-nalists are tried in Hrodna!!!".

On ***3 November*** the members of the Hrodna branch of the PA Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ) made a statement protesting the conviction of Paviel Mazheika to 7 days in prison. «We, members of the Hrodna branch of BAJ, declare a protest against the arrest of our friend and colleague!», said the statement. «We believe the arrest of Paviel Mazheika to be in violation of Article 33 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus and yet another action of political pressure, a step similar to the forced closure of independent periodicals, to the fining, beating and murdering of Belarusian journalists». The statement authors remind the officials of the Leninski BBIA and the judges of the Leninski Borough Court that their activity receives a lot of attention from the community, and reassure the officials that their «names are kept track of, and their actions get appropriate moral and legal evaluation». «We request that the internal affairs agencies and courts renounce the disgraceful role of those executing dirty political purging orders and discontinue persecution of independent journalists and media!», says the statement adopted by the Hrodna Branch of BAJ.

On ***3 November*** the International Institute of the Press urged President of Belarus Aliaksandr Lukashenka to stop persecuting the independent media. In particular, the organization condemned the punishment inflicted on the Belarusian journalist Paviel Mazheika for taking part in an unauthorized rally – 7 days of administrative arrest.

On ***3 November*** Tsentralny Borough Court of Minsk issued a warning to Aliaksandr Karzou, chair of the religious community of Krishna followers. Aliaksandr Karzou was accused of staging divine services in a privately-owned house without the permission of the authorities. For two days judge Aliaksiei Bychko considered the administrative protocol that was composed by the police inspector of Tsentralny borough of Minsk Ihar Nestsiarovich. In this report the policeman stated he "saw seVieral people sing songs and

play religious instruments". The specialist of Minsk City Executive Committee Ala Martynava said that according to the new law on religion members of the Hindu society have to have permission for liturgies in a private house. Warning is the minimal punishment that can be given for doing it without permission. The believer Siarhiei Malakhouski thinks that the warning that was issued by the court is only the beginning of the process: "We understand that they want to wipe us out of the territory of Belarus as a new religious movement so that there are no rivals to the main religion, which is given "green light". It is all made to the good of the monopoly of the Orthodox church, which has the monopoly on representation of God in Belarus – the country where the Orthodoxy has won". Members of the International Society of Krishna Conscience said they would complain to the UN Committee on Human Rights.

On ***3 November*** after the 15 day administrative arrest Paviel Sie-viaryniets, the Young Front leader was interrogated in KGB. The KGB agents asked questions about the street actions of 18-19 October.

On ***3 November*** the reporter of the Narodnaia volia newspaper Iryna Makavietskaia could not attend the joint session of the Presidium of the Supreme Court and the Collegium of the Ministry of Justice that took place in Homiel. I.Makavietskaia asked Valiery Akhliestsin, an official of the ideology department in Homiel Regional Executive Committee, if she could attend the event. Mr. Akhliestsin said that he needed to check it with the Justice Department. On 2 November he phoned I.Makaviets-kaia and said that the press would not be allowed to the sitting. The journalist proposed that the Minister of Justice go out to take the journalists' questions after the sitting. However, the Minister did not go out to talk to the press. The topic of the joint session was of importance to the region: «The results of the checkup on the organization of the work in Homiel Regional Court, in the Justice Department of the Regional Executive Committee, and District Courts».

On ***4 November*** the court in the township of Svislach imposed a fine of 70 basic units on Viktar Sazonau and Siarhiei Malchyk. The court found V.Sazonau and S.Malchyk guilty of violating two articles of the Administrative Code: the use of unregistered symbols and the infrin¬gement of the order of organizing and conducting mass events and pro¬ces¬sions. The regional party leaders were detained during the commemoration of the national heroes of Belarus – Viktar and Kastus Kalinouskis.

On ***4 November*** Belarus refused entry to the head of the regional office of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus Helmut Kurt. It became

known that Helmut Kurt was included into a so-called «black list» of foreigners whose visits to Belarus are deemed as undesirable by the Belarusian authorities.

On ***4 November*** the editorial staff of the Narodnaia Volia newspaper sent an open letter to the Minister of Information Uladzimir Rusakievich, which said: «Dear Mr. Rusakievich: We cannot keep silent when the life of a colleague of ours is in danger. We cannot keep silent when the authorities pretend that nothing extraordinary is happening. Unfortu-nately, it is – Andrei Shantarovich, the editor of the Mestnaya gazeta has been on hunger-strike for 16 days now. Imagine: it is not the second or the third day, but the sixteenth day. Out colleague from Vaukavysk undertook this desperate move after losing any hope for defending his professional rights. He made this desperate step in an attempt to defend the rights of every citizen to truthful, objective information. Should we, the journalists, defend our rights to work by risking our own health and even life? The suspension of the Mestnaya gazeta, denying registration at the Vaukavysk address are the links of the chain of reprisals against the independent media. The papers that cannot be controlled are thrown out of printers for far-fetched reasons. They have to pay discriminatory prices for communications and distribution services. The pressure against the subscribers and advertisers is rising. If Andrei Shantarovich does not stop the hunger-strike, he may die. If you deprive the Belarusian nation of the freedom of speech, it may also die. Unless we all want to die, let us, Mr. Minister, act! Act in defense of the Constitution that guarantees the freedom of speech! Act in defense of the rights of each person! Have your say – do not let Andrei Shantarovich die. Do not let the Mestnaya Gazeta die! Do not let other independent publications die! You are Minister of Information rather than the hangman of the freedom of speech».

On ***5 November*** an ambulance car came to help the Hrodna journalist Paviel Mazheika who continues the hunger-strike of protest in the special detention center of Kastrychnitski Borough of Hrodna. However, accor¬ding to the detention center administration, the state of the journalist's health did not get any worse: in a day the journalist gets 6-7 parcels, especially a lot of water, newspapers, Internet printouts. Paviel Mazheika refused to accept food and went on hunger-strike protesting against the court ruling.

On 5 ***November*** the group of the Russian office of the French TF1, which was shooting a protest staged by the resistance movement Zubr, was detained and deprived of accreditation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The French journalists were kept in the police for two hours, then the police took their videocassette away and deleted the recording.

On ***5 November*** it became known that Mikola Aksamit, a repre-sentative of the Vaukavysk-based human rights group Aslona, was hospitalized and stops his hunger-strike of protest against the falsified elections and referendum. Mikola Aksamit, who had been on hunger-strike for two weeks, called ambulance because of the problems with pressure and heart. He was taken to hospital, where he got an injection of glucose and was advised to stop the hunger-strike because keeping it up would endanger his life. Mr. Aksamit started withdrawing from the hunger-strike. He views his action as necessary. According to Mr. Aksamit, there was no other opportunity to voice the protest: «Thanks to the hunger-strike, the violations and falsifications committed during the elections and referendum became known to all of our town, and all of our town is feeling indignant. Thus, at least this goal has been achieved. When starting the hunger-strike, I had no illusions about the authorities bringing a criminal action against those behind the falsifications. They cannot try themselves, can they».

On ***5 November*** Mikita Sasim, a Zubr movement coordinator, was arrested in Baranavichy because of the court ruling of Tsentralny Borough Court of Minsk. However, he had already served a sentence of 15 days in the special detention center.

On ***5 November*** Mikhail Marynich received the final accusation, which consists of four episodes. The former minister and ambassador is charged with illegal arms storage, theft of property and secret do¬cuments and non-returning of an official seal. Mikhail Marynich received the accusation for familiarization together with the materials of his case. KGB investigators told him they would pass it all to the court as well. According to the attorney Viera Stramkouskaia, Mikhail Marynich said that the authorities took revenge on him for opposition activity. He will start to familiarize with the criminal case in the beginning of the next week. It's worth mentioning that at first the investigators suspected him in counterfeit of money, but then set this charge aside. Nevertheless, they didn't return to him 90 thousand dollars that were confiscated during the detention.

On ***5 November*** the Norwegian Helsinki Committee sent a letter to Mr. Lukashenka urging him to release Paviel Mazheika and other political prisoners. «The decision of the Leninski Court on November 1 is not in itself a novelty, but rather another manifestation of the policy of your Presidency to suppress freedom of opinion, freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly in the attempt to suppress opposition against the current Government», says the letter signed by the Secretary General of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee Bjorn Engesland. The Norwegian Helsinki Committee urges the authorities to stop reprisals against their own population and release all prisoners convicted for politically-motivated grounds, including Paviel Mazheika, and bring the legislation in line with the international standards and conventions signed by Belarus. In

particular, the legislation should provide apparent safeguards of the freedom of opinion, «even if the Government of Belarus may not share these opinions», says the appeal. The Secretary General of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee Bjorn Engesland reminds in the letter of the independent newspapers, political parties and public associations closed down in Belarus, participants of the 19 October demonstration in Minsk arrested, and the opposition leaders beaten. Copies of the Appeal were also sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, the Norwegian Prime-Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Head of the Permanent Committee for Foreign Affairs of the Parliament of Norway.

On ***5 November*** unknowns desecrated the memorial to the Holocaust victims – they set fire to the sheaths and damaged the David star on the monument slab.

On ***8 November*** the Ministry of Information warned the founder of the Kurier iz Borisova newspaper, "Press-service" for alleged violation of articles 2 and 11 of the law "On press and other mass media". Accor¬ding to the ministry, the violation of article 11 is that the editorial board didn't timely inform the ministry about the change of the topics of the edition from advertisement and general information to mass political ones. The ministry also considers as the violation of article 2 that A. Udavichenka is the head of the editorial board, whereas in the issue data L. Atchanashchanka mentioned as the head.

On ***8 November*** the editorial office of the independent newspaper Intex-press received a letter signed by the Town Procurator A.Smal. «In view of the arisen need, you are requested to inform the Procurator's Office of Baranavichy of the former public statements placed in the media by the former candidates to the Chamber of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus regarding the alleged falsifications of the election results». The procurator's office requests that the information regarding such articles should be provided by 10 November.

On ***8 November*** the famous Belarusian journalist, the deputy editor of the Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta Iryna Khalip was summonsed to the Procurator's Office of Minsk to provide explanations regarding the article Dead Men Voting printed by the Russian Novaya Gazeta, which concerned large scale falsifications and law violations during the elections and referendum.

On ***9 November*** Andrei Shantarovich the senior editor of the Vau-kavysk-based Mestnaya Gazeta stopped the hunger-strike that lasted 21 days. The editor did so on the appeal from the leadership of the Belarusian Association of Journalists and the senior editors of 16 independent newspapers who called on him to stop the hunger-strike and save his forces for journalist work.

On ***9 November*** it became known that German Social-Democrats express their protest in view of the actions by the official Minsk toward Helmut Kurt, a manager of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. The appeal on behalf of the governing Social-Democratic faction in Bundestag was made by Uta Zapf. According to Ms Zapf, denying entry to Belarus to Helmut Kurt, a manager of the regional office of the Ebert Foundation, complicates further collaboration between Germany and Belarus. Helmut Kurt, who had been issued a Belarusian visa, could not, however, get to Minsk to attend the international forum staged by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Neither did he get any explanations from the Belarusian authorities. He was simply declared a persona non grata and had to spend the night in the Minsk airport before he could set off to Kiev the following day, says the statement. According to the document, such treatment of someone representing a German political foundation is absolutely inadmissible. The Belarusian authorities have to provide prompt explanation why Mr. Kurt was not allowed to enter the country. The statement underscores that two weeks after Belarus conducted undemocratic parliamentary elections, the political dialog with the official Minsk became all the more complicated. German Social Democrats, however, hope that such regress in the relations between Germany and Belarus is not a goal pursued by the Minsk leadership.

On ***9 November*** it became known that the imprisoned professor Iury Bandazheuski was transferred to the 1st clinic of Minsk. He was diagnosed to have hepatitis, the doctors trying to find out the origins of the virus. Halina Bandazheuskaia, the Professor's wife, does not rule out that the hepatitis virus could have been transmitted during an operation performed on the incarcerated professor in the conditions of the correctional facility. Iury Bandazheuski, the former rector of Homiel Medical Institute, is serving his sentence in Hezgaly, Lida district. He would have to stay in the facility for another two years. The world known scholar is serving his punishment in the penitentiary system for the fifth year. In Hezgaly, Professor works as a night guard at a warehouse. When Bandazheuski felt bad, the correctional facility administration decided to send it for treatment in Minsk, where his family lives. Prof. Iury Bandazheuski, a pathologist by profession, had been incarcerated on charges of bribery. Scholars from all over the world have a high opinion of the work done by the professor, who proved connection of fatal pathologies to the consequences of the Chernobyl Disaster. Human rights groups had demanded that the professor be released. Amnesty International declared him to a political convict. Iury Bandazheuski is an honorable citizen of seVieral cities in France. The incarcerated professor Iury Bandazheuski was elected an honorable doctor of Marseilles Uni¬versity. The French Embassy informed the professor's wife Halina Ban¬dazheuskaya to this effect. The lecturers at Marseilles University familiarized themselves with the

works by Iu.Bandazheuski in the field of radiation medicine, and recognized their uttermost importance to the development of science.

On ***9 November*** the procurator's office started summonsing former candidates for parliament. The allegations of political incorrectness are first of all brought against the UCP members Maryna Bahdanovich and Aliaksandr Tsynkievich, the human rights activist and the member of the Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada Alieh Volchak, who were deregistered by the decisions taken by election commissions. Siarhiei Shestau, the investigator of Leninski Borough Procurator's Office of Hrodna, called Maryna Bahdanovich and asked her to come for interrogation. He explained that she had to testify concerning her speech on the radio that was allegedly insulting to president. He didn't say that a criminal case had been brought. Earlier Lida Inter-District Procurator's Office sent Ms Bahdanovich a letter saying that her case had been transferred to Hrodna Regional Procurator's Office. Maryna Bahdanovich said that the means received from the sale of unregistered arms were spent on "Mercedes" cars for the officials and "Boeing" for president. Alieh Volchak is charged with libeling duty officials. Aliaksandr Tsynkievich is accused of a fly-sheet which said that there was an cold civil war going on in the country.

On ***10 November*** the Belsayuzdruk cancelled the distribution agree-ment with the magazine ARCHE-Pachatak. The cancellation order takes effect from 2 December. It was signed by the Belsaiuzdruk director, the former minister of information of Belarus Mikhail Padhainy. The reason for canceling the agreement was the low volumes of the periodical sold. The magazine founder Andrei Dynko challenges the argument of small demand for the publication: for 6 years around 10-30% of the magazine copies were written off. In October this year the Belkniha company also cancelled the distribution agreement. Thus, ARCHE lost the means for distributing 80% of the circulation. There is only one way remaining now – through subscription. Each issue of the ARCHE has a print-run of 1100 copies.

On ***10 November*** the administrative commission of Piershamaiski Borough of Vitsiebsk warned the famous human rights activist and journalist Valiery Shchukin. In October he was detained three times for distributing fly-sheets calling to say «NO!» at the 17 October referendum. Mr. Shchukin was summonsed to the commission for distributing the fly-sheets which he had prepared and printed with his own money. Zhana Matskievich, Chair of Piershamaiski Borough Exe¬cutive Committee, who is the head of the district administrative commission, banned the journalists from attending the sitting from the very beginning. The hearing of the case behind the closed doors continued for

almost an hour and a half. Finally, after examining three police reports and continuous discussion, the commission members found Mr. Shchukin guilty and issued a warning to him.

On ***11 November*** the Supreme Court of Belarus set aside the comp-laint filed by the founders of the Party of Freedom and Progress Uladzimir Navasiad, Siarhiei Kazlouski and Aliaksandr Mielnikau who argued that the Ministry of Justice denied the party registration on unmotivated ground. The Ministry of Justice has already twice denied registration to the party referring to the disrupted order of the party creation procedures, and incorrect information provided by some of the constituent documents According to Uladzimir Navasiad, the party he has been attempting to create is a liberal one. The members of the party will be mostly the members of the youth public association Civil Forum headed by Uladzimir Navasiad.

On ***11 November*** the administrative committee of Maskouski Borough of Minsk punished the renowned lawyer, human rights and deputy chair of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee Hary Pahaniaila by imposing on him a fine of 5 minimal salaries. The administrative committee decided that the famous human rights activist had been distributing an unregis-tered publication – the report Disappeared People in Belarus by Christos Pourgourides.

On ***11 November*** the economic court of Brest Region granted the suit filed by Luniniets-based company Paliessieelektramash against the Brestskiy kuryier newspaper. The company leadership had regarded as untruthful the facts disclosed by the newspaper in the article called Swamp of Debts dated September 2004, which concerned the salaries, the bills payable, and the number of the employees made redundant within the year. The refutation by Director Mitsienieu was printed by the Brestskiy kuryier but the company managers filed a suit for protecting business reputation. Judge Harbatski ruled to grant the suit and obligated the newspaper to pay the litigation expensed of 95 thousand rubles.

On ***11 November*** in Baranavichy court marshals seized the property owned by the parents of the Zubr activist Maria Hambietskaia. Maria Hambietskaya was fined for taking part in the Free Marynich action that took place on 27 September in Baranavichy. The court passed a ruling by terms of Article 167-1 part 1 (violated order of conducting mass events). The fine imposed is 30 basic units.

On ***12 November*** the Supreme Economic Court of the Republic of Belarus cancelled the order that suspended the Vremya newspaper for 3 months.

On ***12 November*** in Zhlobin Aliena Iarmolchyk, the judge of the district court, heard the administrative case against the Chair of the district branch of the United Civil Party Piatro Mirashnichenka, and ruled to impose on him a fine of 120 thousand rubles for the alleged production and distribution of periodicals. Zhlobin police, the procurator's office, the district Soviet of Deputies and the editor of the governmental newspaper Novy dzien joined in the case against Piotr Mirashnichenka. Mr.Mirashnichenka was found guilty of having prepared and printed a referendum article in his own house: «Let us say no to the life-long dictatorship!». They searched the activist's apartment, confiscated his computer, and initiated an administrative case.

On ***15 November*** the pensioner Valiantsina Saldatava, Vaukavysk hunger-striker, was hospitalized due to the deteriorated state of health. The 67-year-old pensioner from Vaukavysk Valiantsina Saldatava keeps hungering for the 19th day. She protests against the falsification of the results of the election, persecution of the independent Mestnaya Gazeta and the inaction of the authorities in solution of the housing problems. Valiantsina Saldatava is ill with diabetes. That's why doctors insisted on taking her to hospital. However, she agreed only to be in the hospital during the day-time, because she has to look for her granddaughter who goes to school. Valiantsina Saldatava takes medicines and continues the hunger-strike.

On ***15 November*** the activist of Belarusian Social Democratic Party Dziamyian Frankouski was taken to the court of the town of Horki (Mahiliou region) and sentenced to three days in jail for "distribution of fly-sheets that were produced with violations of the established order)". The case against the activist became widely known in Horki because the head of the local veteran organization informed the executive "vertical" and the police about this "dangerous activity" of Mr. Frankouski who had been passing to the party structures the fly-sheets Five steps toward better life.

On ***15 November*** court marshals seized the property owned by the grandmother of the former candidate for Parliament Aliaksei Shein. The officials are planning to use the confiscated property to redeem the fine imposed on Aliaksei for taking part in an opposition-led protest. Aliaksei Shein's grandmother lives in Rakau. Aliaksei became registered in her house in July, getting registered as a candidate in Maladechna electoral district. That was when the authorities recalled that Aliaksei owes money to the government – 1 million 250 thousand rubles. This is a fine inflicted by Maskouski Court in 2001 on the Young Front member after he and his associates laid a sheath outside Minsk Detention Center to commemorate the Minsk resistance activists shot dead by the Nazis. Aliaksei's grandmother recalled 1933. When she was three then, her parents together

with her were sent to Siberia. Before they went there, people in plain clothes also seized their property. Aliaksei Shein is planning to contest the actions of the court marshals in the regional court.

On ***16 November*** the administration of Maskouski Borough of Minsk denied re-registration to the religious community Church New Life of the Association of Full Gospel Christians in the Republic of Belarus.

On ***16 November*** Barysau City Prosecutor's Office brought a criminal case against the senior editor of the Barysauskiya Naviny newspaper Anatol Bukas for "defamation and libeling". "I published the article "Silence of the Lambs" where I described the actions of Viera Pratasevich, senior editor of the local official newspaper Adzinstva, who published three articles against me for this year. Here she called me cock, half-educated student, etc.", said Mr. Bukas. According to him his article was the answer to such expressions of the editor of the newspaper that was founded by Barysau City Executive Committee. By the way, Anatol Bukas published this article in March 2004. Why then bring a case eight months after? "The thing is that Viera Pratasievich insulted not only me, but also another citizen of Barysau, Aliaksandr Monich. She wrote he behaved as a "cave man" at the polling station. He came to me and I told him to prepare a suit to the prosecutor's office. May be, she found it out and sued against me", said Anatol Bukas.

On ***16 November*** Human Rights Center Viasna made a statement saying that the Republic of Belarus doesn't execute its undertakings upon of article 2 of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) that was adopted on 10 December 1984 and ratified by Belarus on 21 January 1987. That's why the center considers visit of a representative of the UN Committee against Torture to Belarus as necessary. Viasna prepared "Preliminary monitoring on facts of tortures and other inhumane treatment of citizens of Belarus", based on the principles of the UNCAT and proposes to consider it at the sitting of the UN Committee against Torture.

On ***16 November*** According to the member of Hrodna branch of Belarusian Association Journalists (BAJ) Andrei Kusialchuk, on 16 November the office of one of local public organizations was visited by the police captain, major inspector of the prophylaxis and public security of Hrodna Leninski Borough Board of Internal Affairs Piatro Lieniets. He said he was looking for the journalist Iryna Charniauka in order to take her explanations concerning the participation in the action of protest of 4 October and compose a protocol of administrative violation. The police had already detained three out of five participants of the action. As a result, Paviel Mazheika was sentenced by

Leninski Borough Court of Hrodna to seven days in prison, and Natalia and Anatol Makushyns had to pay a fine worth 480 thousand rubles. Five Hrodna journalists had staged a picket on 4 October in Savietskaia Street in Hrodna, protesting against the reinforced pressure on the independent press. The journalists held large sheets of paper, which said «They Imprison Journalists in Hrodna!!!». After being warned by the police officers, the journalists stopped the picket and went along the central street of the town with posters in their hands. The action was staged because of the verdict inflicted on the editor of the Birzha informatsii newspaper Aliena Raubietskaia, who was charged with distributing information degrading the President of Belarus

On ***16 November*** Svislach Town Court fined the member of Bela-rusian People's Front Vadzim Saranchukou 70 basic units. On 16 No-vember Vadzim Saranchukou was detained together with Dzmitry Mikhaliuk and Maksim Hubarevich on suspicion in distribution of fly-sheets that explained the mechanisms of the falsifications that took place during the Parliamentary election. The detainees were taken to Hrodna Leninski Borough Board of Internal Affairs. Then the police found that Saran-chukou was searched for the participation in the commemoration of the Kalinouski brothers that took place on 31 October in the town of Svislach. He had to spend the night at the police and in the morning was taken to Svislach Town Court and fined. On 17 November he was taken to Svislach for trial. On 31 October Siarhiei Malchyk, chair of the Hrodna regional branch of the BPF Party, and Viktar Sazonau, chair of the regional branch of the BSDH had been detained in Svislach. Both of them were detained during the commemoration of the national heroes of Belarus Viktar and Kanstantsin Kalinouskis (Viktar Kalinouski is buried at the cemetery of Svislach and in the center of the town there's a monument to Kanstantsin Kalinouski). The participants of the commemoration action had been detained on their way from the grave to the monument. On 4 November the court in the township of Svislach imposed a fine of 70 basic units on Viktar Sazonau and Siarhiei Malchyk. On that day Vadzim Saranchukou did not appear in court, and now he has received the same punishment.

On ***17 November*** the senior editor of the Mestnaya Gazeta news¬paper Andrei Shantarovich was summoned to the police for explanations concerning "unauthorized action" – the hunger-strike of protest against the decision of the Ministry of Information to suspend the edition. The police were interested in the details of the hunger-strike and the fly-sheets with information about it that appeared in Vaukavysk.

On ***17 November*** the Procurator's Office of Zavodski Borough of Minsk summonsed the journalist Aliaksandr Koktysh. The deputy procurator of Zavodzki Borough Siarhiei

Bandarenka asked questions about the journalist's participation in the press-conference that took place on 21 November in Moscow in the editorial office of the Moskovski komsomoliets newspaper. The conference was attended by Valiery Fralou, the deputy representing the Respublika faction, the Belarusian human rights activist Alieh Volchak, the Chair of the Trusteeship Council of the Belarusian-Russian Foundation «For New Belarus» Vasil Liavonau, the public activist Uladzimir Kolas, and the deputy chair of the UCP Aliaksandr Dabravolski. During the press-conference, the participants voiced opinions that do not coincide with the official position of the Belarusian government on the recent parliamentary elections and referendum. Mr.Koktysh was explained the provisions of Article 188 and 400 of the Criminal Code, which concern lies and deliberately untrue information. However, the procurator's office does not press any charges against the journalist.

On ***18 November*** the senior editor of Vaukavysk-based independent Mestnaya Gazeta newspaper Andrei Shantarovich received a written notification from the Plutas-market managers. The letter said that the printing company canceled the printing contract with the periodical's editorial office. The indicated reason for the decision made was the debt of the editorial office to the printers in the amount of somewhat higher than 1 million rubles (around 500 dollars). The Mestnaya Gazeta editor will have to look for another printing company. The contract was cancelled after the newspaper attempted to publish an issue containing information about the results of the parliamentary elections and referendum, which did not come out because the publication had been suspended for 1 month by the decision of the Ministry of Information.

On ***18 November*** it became known that the procurator's office had not returned the property confiscated from the Lievanieuski family. The wife of the head of the national strike committee Valiery Lievanieuski, who was sentenced to two years in prison for having allegedly insulted the President, addressed the Procurator General and some other governmental agencies and officials requesting a decision regarding the property confiscated from the Lievanieuski family. The property confiscated from the Lievanieuskis was worth more than 15 thousand US dollars. Besides, during the search performed by the Hrodna Department of KGB 10 thousand dollars was gone.

On ***18 November*** it became known that four large churches of the Evangelical Baptists in Brest Region face liquidation. The authorities force them to amend their Charter so that religious activities performed outside their registered church become illegal. The heads of the Evangelical Churches in Brest, Kamianiets, Charnauchytsy and Astra-miechava announced their disagreement with the demands from the local

authorities. They argue that agreeing with the proposed conditions would mean a ban on the economic activities performed by the Protestant churches outside their registered premises, on summer camps for youth, and on the participation in humanitarian actions. According to the information of the Protestants themselves, representatives of the Council for Religions have already issued Brest City Executive Committee an order to close the prayer rooms unless the churches agree to amend the Charter as proposed.

On ***18 November*** Khoiniki Court examined the reports against two members of the United Civil Party: Mikalai Isachenka and Lieanid Sudalienka. They were found guilty of having violated Article 172 part 3 of the Code of Administrative Offences. Reports were made on 10 October for distributing fly-sheets which urged voting against the issue put by A.Lukashenka to the referendum. Using the police reports as a basis, the secretary to Khoiniki District Executive Committee Fiodar Hvozdzieu, acting as an official authorized by the Local Council, made reports registering administrative violations. The fly-sheets, which are photocopies of the Narodnaia volia newspaper, of the Dear compatriots and Five Steps to Better Life brochure were called the media. Liudmila Dziambouskaia, Chair of the Court, who examined the report compiled against Mikalai Isachenka, and Judge Mikhail Harashchanka, who examined the administrative case against Lieanid Sudalienka, also regarded the fly-sheets as media. A.Isachenka was fined 5 basic units (120 thousand rubles), L.Sudalienka – 6 basic units (144 thousand rubles).

On ***19 November*** the deputy editor-in-chief of the Belorusskaya delovaya gazeta Iryna Khalip was summonsed to the procurator's office of Partyzanski Borough of Minsk. The investigator Siarhiei Barodzka asked the journalist questions regarding the contents of her article called Revolution of the Fallen Leaf printed in the Russian magazine Novyi ochevidiets and devoted to the protests that swept across the Belarusian capital after the results of the Parliamentary elections and referendum were declared. According to I.Khalip, the journalist and the procurator's office worker discussed the stylistic peculiarities of the article: whether the author viewed as degrading some of the comparisons and epithets used to describe some of the characters (A.Lukashenka, U.Rushaylo). According to I.Khalip, the procurator's office investigator was asked to get the journalist to provide explanations, and give a legal evaluation of her article by the Procurator's Office of Minsk.

On ***19 November*** the Procurator's Office of Baranavichy (Brest Re-gion) issued a warning to the former candidate for the Chamber of Representatives of the National Assembly Arkadz Blinkouski, who had been running in the Uskhodniaya electoral district #5 of Baranavichy. The warning was issued for the article called the Candidate

Commenting published in the independent newspaper Intex-press (#43 dated 21 October 2004). The article declared that the elections had been rigged.

On ***19 November*** the BPF Party Chair Vintsuk Viachorka was detai-ned at the border checkpoint Kamienny loh. He was going to Lithuania on a regular Minsk-Vilnius-Riga bus. None of the officials from Ashmiany Customs Office agreed to provide comments on the occasion.

On ***19 November*** the US Embassy made statement with respect to the closure of the Counterpart branch. The US Embassy expressed its regrets with respect to the decision taken by the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to deny registration to the Counterpart International (CAP) branch in Belarus. The Embassy does not believe that the charter activities pursued by the Counterpart infringed any of the Belarusian laws or regulations. The Counterpart branch cooperated during numerous taxation and legal checkups, and had not received a single warning from any governmental agency of Belarus before it got a registration denial notification. In Belarus the Counterpart has pursued activities within the bilateral agreement between the United States of America and Belarus. According to this agreement, all of the programs conducted in Belarus were approved by the Belarusian government via a resolution adopted by the Council of the Ministers of the Republic of Belarus dated 8 June 2001. These programs supported development of the humanitarian field and communities. The programs and initiatives conducted by the Counterpart benefited many individual Belarusian citizens and organizations from broad sectors of Belarusian society. The Counterpart Alliance Partnership (CAP) and the Counterpart Humani-tarian Aid Program (CHAP) have been operating within the Counterpart International Incorporated, a US public association which has long been promoting economic, ecological and public conditions of human development in more than 60 nations, including the countries of the former Soviet Union. The United States Government has always sought opportunity for constructive cooperation with Belarus in supporting the development of the humanitarian field and communities. The Counter –part programs favored these goals and were an example of positive cooperation between the United States of America and Belarus. The United States Embassy expressed its disappointment at the decision to close this activity and asked if the decision could be reversed. This decision places into a disadvantageous position only Belarusian society, which has long been benefiting from the Counterpart programs and supported them.

On ***23 November*** the criminal case against the public and political activist Mikhail Marynich was transferred to Minsk Borough Court.

On ***24 November*** the Zubr activist Mikita Sasim was detained in Minsk, when handing out orange strips to the passers-by in support of the Our Ukraine leader Viktor Yushchenko.

On ***25 November*** the collegium of Minsk city court chaired by Judge Luhina rejected the complaint filed by Volha Zavadskaia. The mother of the ORT cameraman who disappeared in July 2000 had filed a complaint against the refusal from the Tsentralny Borough Court to review her complaint against the actions of the Republican Procurator's Office. On 20 July during a press-conference A.Lukashenka said that he had "some documents" which may turn Zavadski's case into an "anti-case". Basing on this information, on 4 August the journalist's mother Volha Zavadskaia filed a complaint with the Republican Procurator's Office requesting resumption of the criminal case in view of the "newly disclosed" circumstances of her son's disappearance. The procurator's office did not react to her appeal, and on 17 September V.Zavadskaia filed with the Tsentralny Borough Court of Minsk a complaint against the illegal actions of the procurator's office workers. Because in November Tsentralny Court refused to consider the case because it was "beyond its competence", V.Zavadskaia filed a complaint with a higher court.

On ***25 November*** Liakhavitski District Executive Committee refused accreditation to the Liakhavitski chas journalists (the newspaper founded by the printing house Intex-press) Aliena Vierabiei and Volha Asos. The letter received by the journalists from the Chair of Liakhavichy District Executive Committee A.Sakun says that the district executive committee believes their accreditation is "inexpeDent". "The activity of the district executive committee, its departments and services, the issues of the economic, cultural, sport life of the district are fully covered by the newspapers Zara, Liakhavitski viesnik and the district-based radio company", argues the letter from the District Executive Committee Chair. This has been a second denial of registration to the Liakhavitski chas journalists since the paper was founded in May 2003. Last year the District Executive Committee motivated its decision by saying that the correspondents may get any information from the District Executive Committee without accreditation. The journalists, however, say that this is not always how it happens in reality.

On ***26 November*** Vaukavysk District Court ruled to impose 50 basic units (1 million 200 thousand rubles) on Andrei Shantarovich, after it examined the administrative case against the journalist. Judge Iury Yakimovich believed the hunger-strike by the founder and the senior editor of the Mestnaya gazeta to be an unauthorized picket. Aliaksandr Hliebau, head of the Vaukavysk Department of Internal Affairs, who on 17 November made a report on the administrative violation committed by A.Shantarovich (Article 167

part 1 CAO of Belarus), said in court that all over the town there were posters (including the window of the Mestnaya Gazeta editorial office) put up, which informed of the hunger-strike. In his opinion, this added publicity to the action and turned it into an unauthorized picket. The journalist' lawyer A.Birylau said that the police had not provided the court with any evidence testifying to the guilt of A.Shantarovich, and asked if the proceedings could be stopped. The senior editor of the Mestnaya gazeta himself said in court that he, as a citizen of Belarus, has the right to declare a hunger-strike at any time he wants, and inform the public of this move. On 20 October in protest against the decision of the Ministry of Information to suspend his newspaper for a month, Andrei Shantarovich declared an indefinite hunger-strike of protest, which he had kept for 21 days in the Mestnaya gazeta office in Vaukavysk.

On ***29 November*** the Ministry of Information issued a warning and suspended the independent Hrodna-based newspaper Birzha informatsii for three months. The sanctions imposed on the publication were brought on by the referendum article, for which the senior editor of the publication Aliena Raubietskaia was fined in September. The Ministry believes that the article called Betrayal in the name of the people (#36 dated 9 September 2004) infringed the article 5, 32 and 40 of the Law on the Press. The suspension order and the warning argue that the article "con-tains untruthful information that does not illustrate the legal grounds of the declared referendum, and undermine the dignity of the President of the Republic of Belarus". For the same article A.Raubietskaia was al-ready punished by terms of part 10 Article 172-1 CAO. The phrase found by the court to be knowingly untruthful and undermining the dignity of the President of the Republic of Belarus runs as follows: "The referendum (which is the only means of getting the third term) declared by Mr. President is a gauntlet thrown to society. Not only should you have lack of conscience but also exhibit a "master"-like disrespect for the mob, being absolutely positive that the mob understands nothing". A.Raubietskaia and her representatives in the court proceedings said that this phrase does not have any information apart from referendum declaration information and is the personal thought expressed by A.Raubietskaia. On 30 September A.Raubietskaia was fined 70 basic units (more than 500 Euros) and paid a part of the sum by the end of November. The senior editor is convinced that the newspaper was deliberately stopped prior to the subscription campaign so that it lost its readership. "I do not know how I can keep the premises, the staff and readers", noted A.Raubietskaia. She is indignant that the suspension order was signed simultaneously to the warning, though the newspaper has a legal right to appeal against the latter within a month. The head of the Legal Support Center for Media at the Public Association Belarusian Association of Journalists Mikhail Pastukhou views this as an element of the ongoing campaign against the independent

press, which was launched prior to the elections and the referendum. "The authorities continue to crack down on the periodicals which had the courage to print critical opinions of the issue put to the referendum", believes M.Pastukhou.

On ***26 November*** the Procurator's Office of Leninski Borough of Minsk refused to initiate criminal proceedings to investigate the beating of the United Civil Party leader Anatol Liabiedzka and the journalists of the Russian TV companies NTV and Ren-TV on 19 October. The Procurator's Office workers did not find any crime in the actions of the police officers who had been dispersing the opposition-led rally protesting against the falsification of the elections and referendum. The UCP representatives say that this does not mean that there will be no criminal case brought against the police officers after the power changes in Belarus.

On ***28 November*** the Ministry of Information issued a warning to the independent newspaper Kurier z Barysava. The Barysau periodical, according to the Ministry of Information, violated the press law. According to the editor of the Kuryier z Barysava Liudmila Atchanashanka, the newspaper was issued a dual warning. "First, they believes that because we are an advertising and information paper, we should not print political information. Though, there are not rules specifying this type of infor¬mation. Second, the founder should be allegedly indicated in the imprint, like the newspaper editor", says the editor.

On ***29 November*** Tsentralny Borough Court of Minsk ruled to arrest Iahor Babrou to three days. The police recalled that on 28 October he together with other participants of the protest against the results of the elections was seen on Kastrychnitskaia Square, holding a white-red-white flag in his hand. The police came to Iahor's place early in the morning on 29 November. They explained that he would be taken to court which would examine the administrative report for the violation committed during a mass street action. Iahor Babrou was detained together with the leader of the Belarusian Party of Freedom Siarhiei Vysotski, Viachaslau Siuchyk, Nasta Azarka, Alies Vasilieuski, Uladzimir Biehlik and two under-age guys. Then the under-age guys and Iahor Babrou were let go.

On ***30 November*** the cameramen of the cable television in Brest stopped the broadcasting of three Polish channels (TVP-1, TVP-2, POLSAT). This action was brought on by a letter from the Ministry of Information of Belarus signed by the deputy minister Siarhiei Bulatski. The cable television operators were warned that they had been acting in violation of the Provision on the receiving television and radio systems approved by the Regulation of the Soviet of Ministers of Belarus dated 30 June 2003 #884. The violation is that the operators have been performing "unauthorized broadcasting of the Polish TV

channels in the absence of permission provided by the Ministry of Information of Belarus”. The letter also said that upon occurrence of a second violation, the Ministry of Information will send to the Ministry of Communications a warning regarding the suspension of the license of these cable television operators.

On ***30 November*** Hary Pahaniaila was summonsed to the Procu-rator’s Office of Minsk, where they told him that a week before the Republic Procurator’s Office initiated a criminal action against him by terms of Article 367 of the Criminal Code. The human rights activist is accused of libeling the President of Belarus. The reason for the charges is the interview given by Hary Pahaniaila to the Swedish TV company TV-4 in July. In particular, in this interview Hary Pahaniaila repeated the suspicions he had earlier voiced with respect to the top level officials of the state, including Aliaksandr Lukashenka. The human rights activist believes that A.Lukashenka may be involved with the disappearances and the possible murdering of the Belarusian oppositionists. Com-menting on the charges brought against him by the Procurator’s Office, Hary Pahaniaila highlights the peculiar approach adopted by the Belarusian authorities in this case: “They should be doing all they can to prove themselves innocent. Instead, they are covering up the case, conducting no investigation”. Hary Pahaniaila said that he is ready to produce in court seVieral documents which will prove the correctness of the suspected involvement of the Belarusian leaders with the disap-pearance of the opposition leaders.

On ***30 November*** Pinsk regional printers again refused to cooperate with the independent newspaper Miastsovy chas. For more than a year the Pinsk-based periodical has to be printed in Baranavichy, which raises the cost of the paper and affects its ability to cover events in a prompt manner. According to the senior editor of the publication Viktar Iarashuk, the director of the Pinsk Regional Printers A.Prakopau refers to the printers working above its capacity. At the same time, the printers have new printing equipment that allows up to ten different newspapers to be printed every day. Every week the printers release print-runs of eight regional publications. Also, the Pinsk news kiosks refuse to sell the Miastsovy chas. The head of the local department of the related Belsayuzdruk company Nina Navumchyk said that the kiosks have too many periodicals to sell to have enough room for the Miastsovy chas. Viktar Iarashuk believes that this is how the authorities are settling scores with the newspaper for the critical articles printed.

DECEMBER

On ***1 December*** the international journalist organization Reporters without Borders submitted a note of protest to the information minister Uladzimir Rusakievich concerning the three-month suspension of the non-state newspaper Birzha Informatsii. The Reporters… expressed their concern with the pressurization of non-state press in Belarus and demanded to set aside the order of the newspaper's suspension. The organization also pointed out that Aliena Raubietskaia, chief editor of Birzha Informatsii had been already fined about 500 Euros for the article that became the reason for the sanction. Reporters without Borders consider the suspension of Birzha Informatsii as a part of the persecution campaign that started on the eve of the October referendum.

On ***1 December*** Hrodna Leninski Borough Court, Judge Viktoryia Kulakouskaia sentenced Dzmitry Ivanouski, activist of Hrodna Choice democratic movement, to 15 days in jail for distribution of fly-sheets. These fly-sheets invited businessmen to come to Lenin Square on 29 November and collect signatures for impeachment to the local administration. An unauthorized meeting of Hrodna businessmen took place in Zhyliber Street instead of collection of signatures. About 70 people took part in it. The businessmen demanded from Hrodna Regional Executive Committee the order that obliged them to buy cash registers and prohibited to sell confectionery. During the meeting the police took Ivanouski to the court so that he couldn't take part in the action.

On ***1 December*** Polatsk City Court considered the suit of Free Trade Union of Belarus to Navapolatsk City Executive Committee and refused to satisfy it. FTUB tried to complain against the refusal of the authorities to register three trade union structures – Navapolatsk-Polatsk regional organization, primary units at Naftan enterprise and Navapolatsk Heating Plant. The primary units had legal status till May 2003. However, after the FTUB assembly that adopted changes to the organization statute, regional and primary units of the trade unions faced problems with re-registration. First attempt to register took place in August 2003. Navapolatsk City Executive Committee allegedly found deficiencies in the filed documents. After the second and the third attempt the statute of the trade union wasn't accepted for registration. FTUB spent much time trying to complain against the decision of the executive committee, but the court officials couldn't decide what court was to consider the case. Finally, Zoia Plaksa, judge of Polatsk City Court, rejected the complaint. The reason for such verdict was that two members of Navapolatsk Heating Plant submitted to the court the statements they weren't members of FTUB, but were included in the trade union and its power structures without their

agreement. Later these statements were revoked. The court advised to the trade union to “file the registration documents one more time”.

On ***2 December*** the web-site of United Civil Party was paralyzed for more than 12 hours. According to the UCP press service, unknown hackers used some flaws in the defense system of the site. The party representatives consider this incident along with the recent attempt to force the office lock. The UCP site is a popular information source: everyday some 800 – 1 000 people visit it. “We understand who needs to hide the alternative view on the political and economical processes that are going on in Belarus. They have already attempted to ruin the site seVieral times, but we will continue working”, — reads the press-release.

On ***2 December*** Anatol Liabiedzka, chair of United Civil Party, was summoned to Minsk Tsentralny Borough Procurator’s Office for explanations concerning an article in Polish Gazeta Wyborcza. The procurator’s office paid interest to the newspaper article that referred to Anatol Liabiedzka as the source of information. The article was dedicated about the council at the Presidential administration on the eve of the election. Anatol Liabiedzka refused to testify. He said to A. Ramasheuski, vice-chair of Minsk Tsentralny Borough Procurator’s Office, that the procurator’s office was an instrument of political persecution of the regime’s opponents. The politicians also stated it would be immoral to cooperate with the procurator’s office after its refusal to bring a criminal case on the fact of his beating by the police during the street action of 19 October.

On ***2 December*** Minsk Savietski Borough Procurator’s Office warned Siarhiei Kaliakin, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Party of Communists of Belarus (PCB). The procurator Mikalai Platnitski handed to the leader of the opposition communists the warning about “inadmissibility of dissemination of libeling insinuations”. Siarhiei Kaliakin thinks that the reason for the warning was that four days before the referendum and the Parliamentary election Polish press published the information about the results at certain polling stations: “I am not a prophet and I couldn’t predict the results of the referendum and the election in the majority of the polling stations of election circuit #106. In fact, the numbers I drew met the official results. That’s why I am convinced the results of the referendum and the election were pre-defined”, — said Siarhiei Kaliakin.

On ***2 December*** it became known that Iryna Makavietskaia, corres-pondent of Narodnaia Volia in Homiel region, could be administratively punished for the attempt to visit open trial. The trial on the administrative case the journalist was going to elucidate started at Homiel Chyhunachny Borough Court. In the beginning the chair of the court

Tatsiana Adrybets stated she didn't allow I. Makavietskaia to stay in the court hall. The journalist refused to go out, saying she would obey only to legal demands. After this the judge called the police, who took Makavietskaia to Homiel Chyhunachny Borough Board of Internal Affairs.

On ***3 December*** the Ministry of Justice issued second warning to the Board of the Union of Belarusian Writers. The warning was issued for a formal reason. "Brest Leninski Borough Inspection of Dues and Taxes informed the Ministry of Justice that Brest regional branch of the public association "Union of Belarusian Writers" hasn't submitted the monthly accountancy to the tax inspection for a long time (since June till the present moment) by which it grossly violates point 1b of Article #8 of the law on bookkeeping and accounting. In such circumstances and being guided by Article #28 of the law of the Republic of Belarus On public associations a warning is issued to the Board of the public association Union of Belarusian Writers", — reads the text of the warning. The first warning to the Union of Writers was issued in June 2004. The actions of the Ministry of Justice seem to be politically motivated and their aim is to liquidate the independent creative organization. After it the state can establish a loyal organization of writers on the basis of Minsk city organization of writers that acts at Literature and Art state holding. The warning was issued at the same time with the prohibition to writers to use the large hall of the House of Writers for its measures and the threat of eviction of the secretariat of the Union from the building.

On ***6 December*** Polatsk City Court fined the observer of Belarusian Helsinki Committee Uladzimir Amosau 48 thousand rubles (about $22) for alleged defamation of duty official. Uladzimir Amosau was an observer at election circuit #89 in Polatsk district. On 13 October, one of the days of early voting, he called to the police and said that the chairman of the commission together with his friends drank alcoholic beVierages in a closed room. Three hours later the police came to the polling station and drove the chair of the election commission away for medical expertise (on his own agreement). According to the official version, the expertise found no alcohol in his blood. As a result, the BHC observer was charged with slander and a case was brought against him. According to Mr. Amosau, the case was inspired by the authorities. The witnesses, who were present at the polling station on 13 October and were to have testified on the defendant's side, didn't come to the court because of psychological pressurization.

On ***6 December*** the US Embassy expressed its concern with the strengthening of assaults on independent civil society in Belarus. During the last two years the US has often protested against the systematic actions of Lukashenka's government aimed at

smothering of independent voices in the country. The situation after the October election (that was evidently non-democratic) showed the pressurization was growing.

On ***7 December*** the artist Mikola Aksamit, chair of Vaukavysk regional human rights organization Aslona, was detained near his house with the picture he painted on his own. The police charged him with having stolen the painting. After the composition of the report M. Aksamit was sentenced to five days in jail.

On ***7 December*** the journalist Iryna Khalip was summoned to the Procurator's Office of the Republic of Belarus. The procurators Stanislau Novikau and Sviataslau Holik paid interest to the article "Drunk Executioners" in the Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta. In this article it was mentioned that Belarus is the only European country with death penalty. Iryna Khalip also described the details of the fusillades in Minsk and the visit of the head of the brigade of special police forces Dzmitry Paulichenka to the investigative isolator where death sentences were executed. The procurators tried to find out what was the source for the factual materials of the article and took official explanations from the journalists about it. Iryna Khalip is of the opinion that most probably the highest Belarusian officials ordered their subordinates to punish those who criticized the authorities during the electoral period and the duty officials execute this order.

7 December it became known that the authorities of the Ministry of Information didn't want to meet with representatives of non-state mass media. "The Ministry of Information doesn't plan any meetings with members of the Board of the public association Belarusian Association of Journalists and editors of non-state editions in the nearest time". That's how the Ministry of Information responded to the official proposal of Belarusian Association of Journalists to meet and discuss the situation of mass media. On 1 November BAJ also sent an appeal to Uladzimir Rusakievich, asking him to set aside the suspension of Mestnaya Gazeta newspaper, issued in Vaukavysk. The ministry answered it didn't see any legal reasons for doing it.

On ***8 December*** the European Union decided to prohibit the entrance to its territory to the head of the Central Election Committee of Belarus Lidziia Iarmoshyna the police colonel Padabed who took part in the beating of Anatol Liabiedzka. This decision was taken within the sanctions towards Belarusian authorities after the referendum of 17 October about the continuation of the presidential powers of Aliaksandr Lukashenka.

On ***8 December*** Procurator's Office of Belarus warned Alhierd Nie-viarouski, journalist of Radio Liberty. The reason for the warning was the article that was put to the site of Radio Liberty with the photos that were made at a polling station during the early voting at the parliamentary election. In the article it was stated that the electors were

given referendum ballots with positive vote already standing there. In the prosecutor's office the journalist was informed that the information he distributed was allegedly wrong: these were ballots for parliamentary election and the absence of the candidate V. Palievikova was marked there. The workers of the office familiarized Neviarouski with article 40 of the "Law on press and other mass media" and warned about the necessity to check information, saying that in the case of repetition of such a case the journalist could be deprived of accreditation.

On ***8 December*** the leader of Young Front Paviel Sieviaryniets was questioned as a witness at the board of Minsk investigative committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs concerning the disorders on 18-19 October in the center of Minsk. The case was brought upon Article #342 of the Criminal Code – "organization of group actions that violate the public order or active participation in them".

In the evening of ***10 December***, the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, hundreds of Minsk citizens came out to Kastrychnitskaia Square of Minsk to protest against human rights violations in Belarus. After the picket they went to the KGB office and posted the portraits of the missing people to its walls.

On ***10 December***, Human Rights Day, Belarusian human rights activists submitted their appeal to Procurator General, where they expressed their concern with the situation of human rights in the country and the belief that in this situation the procurator's office was to have played a special role in protection of the rights and legal interests of citizens. The appeal was accepted by the duty procurator Barys Zhyl-dzietski. The report "Missing Persons in Belarus" by Christos Pour-gourides was attached to the appeal.

On ***10 December*** Minsk Frunzenski Borough Court fined Andrei Baranau about 1 500 US dollars. 150 basic values. On 7 December the police detained in Minsk the members of Zubr movement Andrei Baranau and Maksim Viniarski for distribution of the newspaper with the urges to come to the action, devoted to the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December. The night after the detention the youngsters spent in Akrestsin Street in Minsk. On 8 December Minsk Frunzenski Borough Court decided to postpone the trial of Andrei Baranau to 10 December and the trial of Maksim Viniarski – to 17 December.

12 December it became known that Dziarzhynsk authorities refused to re-register the Union of Full Gospel Slova Praudy (Word of Truth). The official reason for the refusal was non-timely filing of the documents for re-registration. Pastor Mikalai Koziel is of the

opinion that the real reason is connected to his political activity — he was nominated as a candidate to the Chamber of Representatives.

In the ***night of 13 December*** three workers of KGB searched the flat of the vice-head of the Independent Institute for Social, Economic and Political Studies Aliaksandr Sasnou. On 13 December the institute published the results of its poll that was conducted in November 2004. According to the poll only 49% of citizens voted for the changes of the Constitution at the referendum of 17 October 2004. At night KGB workers phoned carried out quick examination of the flat. They paid no interests to the institute affairs and searched for some tools of crime. They had no procurator's sanction, only resolution of vice-head of KGB. They were in a great hurry and even had no blanks of search protocol, that's why one of them wrote it on a blank sheet of paper. Officially the searches stated they wanted to find something connected to the businessman A. Pap¬¬kou who was charged with purposeful bankruptcy of the firm he headed. However, three years have passed since the businessman left the flat. That's why they couldn't find anything there and they didn't find anything, which was witnessed in the protocol. In its statement the direction of the institute points out that during the last months the institute has become an object for persecution for the official authorities. During September-November the institute received eight letters from the Ministry of Justice with different pretensions. SeVieral days before the referendum the institute director Alieh Manaieu was summoned to a talk with the justice minister Viktar Halavanau. There he was given for familiarization the conclusion of the ministry for liquidation of the institute for "numerous violations" that was prepared for the Supreme Court. In the end of November he was also summoned to the prosecutor's office for explanations concerning the polls that were conducted by the Baltic department of the institute during the election and the referendum. The direction of the institute considers the actions of the authorities as an attempt to pressurize the institute and intimidate its workers in order to prevent receiving of objective information by Belarusian citizens and international community.

On ***13 December*** the office of Young Front in Zhodzina was sealed. The vice-had of the department on affairs of minors Haroshka and the acting head of Zhodzina police Ilyich came there. They said they received information that the flat was used as office and warned members of Young Front that they would be criminally punished for another attempt to rent a flat for office.

On ***14 December*** KGB warned Dzmitry Barodka. He received a call-up to KGB and had to go there. The KGB worker Dzianis Iakubouski explained that Barodka's activity since the beginning of 2002 could be considered as violation of article 342 of the Criminal Code (something like organization and active participation in street disorders). He

mentioned all detentions of Barodka since 2002 and the latest detention, on 20 October, after referendum.

16 December the international human rights organization Amnesty International issued the special statement concerning the significant deterioration of the situation of human rights in Belarus after the election and the referendum that were conducted in October. Amnesty Interna-tional also reminded that Russia blocked the discussion of the human rights situation in Belarus at the UN. To the mind of this international human rights organization it was getting more and more dangerous to openly express one's thoughts and criticize the authorities. Among the examples Amnesty International mentioned the criminal case brought against Hary Pahaniaila for interview to the Swedish TV, criminal case against Anatol Liabiedzka for libel against president, suspension of Hrodna newspaper Birzha Informatsii and fine to its chief editor Aliena Raubietskaia, imprisonment of Paviel Mazheika and the summons to procurator's office submitted to Iryna Khalip. In its statement Amnesty International also pointed at the violent actions of the police towards participants of peaceful demonstrations against the falsification of the election and the referendum, beating of Anatol Liabiedzka, administrative arrests and fines to 40 participants of these protest actions. The organization urged the international community to pressurize Belarusian authorities in order to make them stop human rights violations.

On ***17 December*** Iryna But-Husaim, correspondent of the web-site Trade Union Movement of Belarus wasn't allowed to attend the press-conference of Lieanid Kozik, chairman of the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus. The press conference "The results of the implementation of the FTUB schedule for 2004. Priority directions of the activity of FTUB for 2005" of took place at the sitting hall of the House of Trade Unions. Having consulted with the administration, a worker of the press-service refused to let the correspondent in, saying she had no accreditation.

On ***17 December*** Minsk Frunzenski Borough Court sentenced the activist of Zubr Maksim Viniarski to 15 days in jail. Let us remind that on 7 December the police detained in Minsk Andrei Baranau and Maksim Viniarski for distribution of the newspaper with the urges to come to the action, devoted to the anniversary of the Universal Dec¬laration of Human Rights on 10 December. The night after the detention the youngsters spent in Akrestsin Street in Minsk. On 8 December Minsk Frunzenski Borough Court decided to postpone the trial of Andrei Baranau to 10 December and the trial of Maksim Viniarski – to 17 December.

On ***17 December*** Aliaksandr Silich, vice-editor of Narodnaia Volia, asked for political asylum in Belgium. According to Halina Matsiushyna, coordinator of the Solidarity Federation that unites refugees from the countries of the Eastern Europe, Aliaksandr Silich was in a refugee camp and his application was considered by the Commission on refugees' affairs and the Ministries of Foreign and Internal Affairs of Belgium. Ala Silich, the journalist's wife, stated that her husband was in danger: their house was watched and the telephones were bugged. According to Mr. Silich, it started more then two years ago, when on 17 September 2002 he asked A. Lukashenka about the existence of the non-budget presidential fund. Aliaksandr Lukashenka answered: "If the fund exists, tomorrow I am not president, but if there's no fund, Narodnaia Volia won't be any more. Do you agree to it? There's no such fund".

On ***19 December*** the practical scientific conference "Belarus after the referendum: perspectives of development" was to have taken part in the International Educational Center in Minsk. 250 former democratic candidates to the Parliament from different regions of Belarus intended to take part in it. However, the entrance door was closed. The chair of United Civil Party Anatol Liabiedzka said that the officials of Minsk City Executive Committee phoned to the conference organizers on its eve and said that it was prohibited. Anatol Liabiedzka commented:

— Before that I thought that Belarusian authorities are deceitful, now I also see they are fearful. It is demonstration of fear. They took a political decision – not to let us meet. I understand why – the 250 candidates who gathered here have real political force. Anatol Liabiedzka said that 0,5 million people signed for these 250 persons. According to the sociological polls at least 40 of them were to have been elected into the Parliament. These people have their commands and are ready for working. They came to Minsk to support the united strategy of the democratic forces in preparation to the presidential election. The conference was conducted right on the stairs at the entrance of the International Educational Center. Siarhiei Kaliakin, Anatol Liabiedzka, Stanislau Shushkievich? Vintsuk Viachorka and other opposition politicians took the floor at the assembly. They urged the former candidates to explain their supporters in the region that the majority of Belarusians were for changes. The meeting participants adopted a resolution. The organizers stated they would conduct one more session in 2005, outside Belarus in order to discuss the experience of the electoral campaign of 2004 and the immediate tasks and aims of democratic forces.

On ***22 December*** Belarusian election observers had a briefing about their mission during the second tour of the presidential election in Ukraine. The briefing held in Hotel Belarus was at its height when riot squad police burst in and detained over 100

participants of the meeting. The participants – representatives of pro-democratic NGOs – were supposed to leave for Kyiv that evening to participate in observation of the Ukrainian election as part of ENEMO international mission. All Belarusian observers had already been accredited by the Central Election Commission of Ukraine as international observers. The detention was video recorded by people in plain clothes. The detained participants of the briefing were taken to Minsk Tsentralny Borough Board of Internal Affairs "for iden-tification". Viasna chairperson Alies Bialiatski, lawyer Uladzimir Labkovich, and about 40 Viasna members were among the detained. The police finger-printed some of the detainees, video-recorded them, carried out personal search and examination of their belongings. The police officers explained that all the detained were taken to the police station for identification. Despite objections of the detained, they all were kept in police station longer than the legal 3 hours and released at 9.30 p.m., after the train to Kyiv departed. The police drew up no reports of detention or offence. Despite all the obstacles, 40 members of the Human Rights Center Viasna managed to leave for Ukraine the same night. Viasna members participate in the international mission of Ukrainian election observation organized by ENEMO – European network of Election Monitoring Organizations. Human Rights Center «Viasna» is a member of ENEMO since 2001. Viasna members observed the election in Poltava, Luhansk, and Kharkiv regions of Ukraine.

In December the student Alies Smolski was remanded from Suvorov Minsk Military College for membership in Young Front and collection of signatures under the demand to give to the college the name of Bela¬rusian general Tadeusz Kasciuszka instead of the Russian Aliaksandr Suvo¬rov. We should remind that in 1993-1994 a part of deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the 12th Convocation raised the question about the renaming of the college. Alies thusly explained his position: — Why be the college where our citizens study be named in the honor of Suvorov? Kosciuszko fought for the independence of Belarus, whereas Suvorov drowned the riot against the occupation of Belarus by the Russian Empire in blood. It is an insult to all Belarusians that this college is named in his honor. For historical justice it would be better if it was named in Kosciuszko's honor. According to Alies Smolski, the counter-espionage of the college found that in August he joined Young Front. After it the administration started to summon him and conduct real interrogation and then warned they would remand him. Alies Smolski said: — I was warned I would be remanded. The head of the college said I behaved like a dog that beat the hand of those who feed him. I don't want to be a dog! I want to be a man who builds his life on his own initiative, not the one who is fed and given clothes and who has to

sacrifice his life for it! I have my own opinion. I think that our college must be named in honor of the real hero of Belarus – Tadeush Kosciuszko.

At about 8 p.m. on 22 December in Minsk the cameraman of the Russian REN-TV company Uladzimir Kostsin was detained. The police detained him at Minsk Savietski Borough Board of Internal Affairs for 2,5 hours and damaged his camera. U. Kostsin was detained during the police search at Minsk office of the public initiative Partnership. The police detained the journalists immediately on arrival to the office. They made the cameraman get into their car and took him to Savietski BBBIA where he had to give explanations. According to the correspondent Aliena Slau, the police broke the TV camera of U. Kostsin. Experts registered a number of damages, but the video-materials were saved and after the repair the camera can work further. On 22 December complained to the chair of Savietski BBIA against the police actions. SeVieral hours before the incident the journalists filmed the opposition's action in Iakub Kolas Square. Fly-sheets "Freedom to Marynich!" were thrown down from the roofs of the adjacent houses. The action was dedicated to the beginning of the trial of the politician. According to A. Slau, the police tried to detain the journalists, but they managed to escape the detention and even pass the video materials to Russia. U. Kostsin continued to work during the trial of Mary-nich. It's worth mentioning that U. Kostsin was among the victims of the police violence demonstrated during the police action of 19 October.

On ***24 December*** Piatro Martsau, chief editor of Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta, was summoned to the Procurator's Office of the Republic of Belarus. There he was given the official warning signed by the vice-procurator general Mikalai Kupryianau. The reason for the warning was the article "Procurator's Office of the Republic investigates Tozik's environment». The article's author whose nickname was Hiaorhi Dan, informed the readers about the initiation of a criminal case against the worker of the Committee of State Control Charadnichenka. The procurator's office stated that he "without reference to concrete sources of information made … statements in categorical form." (in the article it was written that procurator general personally approved of the initiation of the case and that "the case is called groundless and associated with opposition of two high-level state officials"). In the warning it is also stated that the investigator didn't give any interviews to journalists. The procurator's office considered that the author of the article didn't execute the demands of articles #32 and 40 of the law on press (didn't provide the right of citizens to receive true information about the activity of state organs and didn't check whether the information he received was true or no). In the text of the warning it is stated that P. Martsau "refused to tell the names of the authors of the article and didn't provide any information to confirm that the information of the article was true". In

these circumstances and being guided by part 2 of article #22 and Article #39 of the law On Procurator's Office of the Republic of Belarus the vice-procurator issued a warning to the editor of Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta.

On ***24 December*** five activists of Young Front picketed Suvorov Minsk Military College to protest against the remand of Alies Smolski. They stood near the college check-point with the poster "Hands off Smolski".

On ***25 December*** Adrian Severin, special rapporteur of the UN Committee on Human Rights, former chair of the Parliamentary Assembly of OSCE wasn't allowed into Belarus.

On ***28 December*** the police detained about 20 persons in Ianka Kupala Park in Minsk for handing out orange stripes to passers by and New Year congratulations. All detainees were taken to Minsk Tsentralny Borough Board of Internal Affairs. Among them there were the activist of United Civil Party Maryna Bahdanovich, the journalist of Narodnaia Volia newspaper Volha Klaskouskaia and the activist of Zubr movement Iryna Toustsik. One of the detainees was dressed as Santa-Claus. At 6 p.m. on 28 December 2004 it was intended to congratulate people with New Year, change orange stripes to oranges and set the tent that was donated to Minsk citizens by Kyiv students. Despite the fact that the people who gathered in the park didn't violate anything, the police detained them, to be on the safe side.

28 December Minsk City Executive Committee didn't register the juridical address of Krychau non-state newspaper Volny Horad. A number of other newspapers also faced with this problem during 2004. The city authorities stated that as long as the newspaper originated from Krychau, it was to be registered in Mahiliou region, where this town is situated. In their answer the capital's officials referred to Article #10 of the law on press. The lawyers of Belarusian Association of Journalists think that the actions of the authorities don't conform to the norms of the present legislation and create artificial obstacles for the development of non-state mass media. Andrei Bastuniets, BAJ-vice-chair, emphasized that "the activity of the subjects of economy embraces the whole territory of Belarus, that's why the newspaper could be issued anywhere in the country" irrespective to the place where the editors live. The editorial board of Volny Horad made seVieral attempts to register the edition in Mahiliou region, but received refusals every time. Having no juridical address, a newspaper can have circulation of not more than 299 copies. The newspaper editors wanted to widen the territory of the newspaper's distribution and increase the circulation, but the authorities refused to register the juridical address to the newspaper, as well as to the newspapers Afisha in Smarhon, Novaya Gazeta Smorgoni and Sobstvennyi Kommentariy in Krychau. The registered

editions often face with such problems. For instance, the Ministry of Information made the editorial board of Mestnaya Gazeta agree the transfer of its juridical address from Smarhon to Vaukavysk with the local authorities. The newspaper tried to do it for a year. In the end of November, having received another groundless refusal from Vaukavysk District Executive Committee, the founder and the chief editor of the newspaper Andrei Shantarovich sent to it a protest note with the demand to solve the problem, promising to sue it otherwise.

28 December Hantsavichy district telecommunications division refused to place the ad of the non-state newspaper Hantsavitski Chas in the ether of the local radio. The ad concerned the subscription to the newspaper. The division referred to technical impossibility to do it. However, Hantsavichy district telecommunications division broadcasts on the radio for at least 2 times per week. By the way, half a year ago the newspaper applied to the division with a similar request and even paid money for the broadcast of the advert. The ad was broadcast for one time only and wasn't repeated.

On ***29 December*** the members of Belarusian People's Front Kans-tantsin Horny and Uladzislau Tokarau were detained by the police in Freedom Square in Vitsiebsk for handing out fly-sheets "Truth about referendum and elections in Belarus" and calendars with the diary of Radio Liberty. Two policemen came up to the activists and demanded from them to go to a police station. They introduced themselves only when Uladzislau Tokarau demanded it from them. They said they had to detain Tokarau and Horny for "distribution of illegally printed production, though the guys said the fly-sheets had issue data and were printed in Minsk in conformity with the law demands. The police confiscated about 300 fly-sheets and a number of calendars of Radio Liberty. At the police station the policemen issued to the detainees call-ups to the administrative commission of Kastrychnitski borough of Vitsiebsk for 12 January 2005.

On ***30 December*** 2004 Minsk District Court sentenced Mikhail Marynich, former minister of the internal economic relations of Belarus, former Ambassador of Belarus in Latvia, Estonia and Finland, deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the 12th Convocation, leader of Belarusian association "Business Initiative" to five years in jail with confiscation of property. The court successfully executed the order of the authorities. Marynich was arrested on 26 April 2004 and charged upon two articles of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus: part 2 of article #295 (illegal actions with fire arms, armament and explosives" and part 2 of article #210 (theft by abuse of the office powers). During the arrest, 90 000 US dollars were confiscated from Mikhail Marynich together with a pistol. During the investigation Marynich's defense lawyers managed to prove that Marynich had no relation to the pistol and it was left at the summer residence by the unknown

persons, who burst there before the arrest. M. Marynich was found guilty only on one point – embezzlement of the organization equipment, given for free-charge temporary use to the public organization Belarusian association "Business Initiative". The verdict was issued despite the letter of the US Ambassador in Belarus George Krol where it was stated that the US State Department had no pretensions to M. Marynich. M. Marynich was detained in investigative isolator for seven months before the trial, despite the medical conclusion about considerable deterioration of his health and the requests of the relatives to change the restraint because of his heart diseases. Mikhail Marynich called the trial a political order and persecution for his democratic views, active work on creation of the civil society, the intention to run at the presidential election and the view of the European way of development for Belarus. He stated that the criminal case was fabricated only for those reasons. The hour before the trial the court was occupied by unknown persons in plain clothes who didn't let anybody in. Only Marynich's relatives, diplomats and seVieral journalists managed to get to the trial. The plain clothes also rudely let out the journalist Mikalai Khaliezin. During the trial seVieral dozens of Zubr activists, political and public activists kept their duty in front of the court. On hearing the verdict that chanted "Shame!". The overwhelming majority of the people, questioned by the Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Research said that the persecution of Mikhail Marynich was politically motivated and called him one of the most perspective candidates to presidency in Belarus.

On ***30 December*** Paviel Uhrynovich, activist of Mahiliou branch of Zubr movement, was fired for support to Mikhail Marynich. P. Uhrynovich was summoned by the director of Mahiliou House-building Combine and said the worker was fired. He didn't hide that the reason was the political activity of the youngster and said he had often received telephone calls from the police concerning Uhrynovich's participation in political actions.

RESOLUTION OF THE BELARUSIAN PARTICIPANTS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS FORUM

We, the Belarusian participants of the Forum of the human rights defenders, having heard the reports and having discussed issued of observance of human rights in the Republic of Belarus, and being deeply concerned in the Present and the Future of this country, draw attention to:

The repeated facts of violation of human rights in the Republic of Belarus that manifest itself in politically motivated kidnappings and prosecution of the opponents of the regime, unlawful introduction of censorship in the mass media, prosecution of journalists of the inde-pendent mass media for published materials containing criticism of the policy of the President and his authorities, dissolution (by initiative of the governmental bodies, in legal form including) of independent news-papers and non-governmental organizations, violation of religious rights of the citizens, other violation of political, civil, election, social, and lan-guage rights.

Many of the passed legislative acts do not conform with the inter-national human rights standards and lead to violation of the constitutional rights of the citizens of the Republic of Belarus, including violation of the laws of the Republic of Belarus «On the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations», «On Mass Events in the Republic of Belarus», «On the Languages in the Republic of Belarus», as well as the draft law «On the Mass Media in the Republic of Belarus».

The Republic of Belarus has not got neither an independent judicial system as an independent power branch, nor the institute of the inde-pendent Bar. It makes impossible to defend violated human rights of the citizens in the courts, deprives the citizens of this country of their right to independent and just proceeding, restricts their access to justice.

Special consent of the representatives of the human rights defending movement is caused by the fact, that full, impartial and public investi-gation of forced kidnappings of the well-known political and public figures Yury Zakharenko, Victor Gonchar, Anatoly Krasovsky, Dmitry Zavadsky has not been carried out until now.

The conclusion that such investigation has not been carried out was included in the official report of the Committee on Legal Issues and Human Rights of the Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Such conclusion and the information, which has become known at the result of journalists' and public investigations, gives grounds to believe that certain high-rank governmental officials and functionaries, in par-ticular, V. Sheiman – General Prosecutor, Y. Sivakov – Minister of Sports, V. Naumov – Minister if Inner Affairs, D. Pavlichenko – officer of the Special Quick Respond Unit, and others, – were involved in such crimes aimed at kidnapping and, possible, physical liquidation of Y. Zakharenko, V. Gonchar, A. Krasovsky, D Zavansky by political motives.

WE, the representatives of the human rights defending movement of Belarus, CAME TO A CONCLUSION, that:

– Situation related to observance of human rights in Belarus is steadily worsening;

– Representatives of official powers grossly violate the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, international pacts and conventions ratified by the Republic of Belarus, resolutions and recommendations of the international organizations, including UNO, OSCE, PACE, etc.;

– National, religious, and language discrimination exists in the Republic of Belarus in its different forms and manifestations;

– Severe authoritarian regime of personal power of A. Lukashenko has been established in this country; such institutes of a civil society as independent electronic and printed mass media, independent non-governmental organizations have been actually destroyed; and a newly created governmental ideology witnesses of emerging of the elements of totalitarism in this country;

– Prosecution of and opposition to the activity of the human rights defenders puts the right-defending activity outlaw.

WE, the participants of the Forum of the Belarusian human rights defenders, DEMAND that the official powers of the Republic of Belarus:

– Strictly follow the international obligations in the field of human rights undertaken by the Republic of Belarus; take certain measures for real ensuring of rights and freedoms of the citizens guaranteed by the Constitution, and for implementation of the recommendations elaborated by the participants of the Forum.

– Carry out full impartial and public investigation of disappearance of Yury Zakharenko, Victor Gonchar, Anatoly Krasovsky, Dmitry Za¬vadsky, and actions (absence

of actions) of the high-rank authorities of the Republic of Belarus as regards such investigations.

In this connection we think it necessary to examine materials sub-mitted to the investigating office by the legal representatives of the families of the kidnapped persons, by the expert of UN Working Group on Forced Disappearances, and by Special PACE Sub-Committee, as well as by other interested organizations and natural persons

We also think it mandatory that during such investigation the powers of the officials who have probably been involved in this crime be suspended.

– Start elaboration of draft laws in the field of human rights, providing for inherent rights of the citizens and conforming to the requirement of the international standards and the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus.

– Enter changes into the governing election legislation with the purpose to guarantee the principles of publicity, transparency, and democracy of the election process that will ensure actual execution of election rights of the citizens of this country and provide for public control of the elections.

– Carry out an open public dialogue between the non-governmental organizations and representatives of the governmental bodies in the issues related to changes of the legislation and practical implementation of the demands stated in this Resolution.

– One of the most acute problems of such dialogue shall be positive cooperation of the governmental authorities of this country with the fa-milies of the disappeared persons, human rights defending organizations, independent lawyers, and international bodies.

We are convinced that practical implementation of the demands stated in this Resolution will enable to restore civil society and establish a system of governmental power based on strict execution of the citizens's rights in Belarus, and will make it possible to overcome self-isolation and build a democratic law-abiding state.

Minsk, 24.01.2004

PRELIMINARY MONITORING OF HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER “VIASNA” CONCERNING TORTURES AND FACTS OF OTHER KINDS OF INHUMANE TREATMENT TOWARDS CITIZENS OF BELARUS

In its monitoring the Human Rights Center Viasna uses the definition of torture as it stands in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 10 Decem¬ber, 1984, ratified by the Republic of Belarus on 21 January, 1987 — “torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, puni¬shing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity”.

The Republic of Belarus ratified the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. According to Article 2 of the Convention, “Each State Party shall take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction”.

The monitoring consists of:

1. Facts which became known to the Human Rights Center «Viasna» in 2003-2004 on the basis of written statements of the victims of torture to the Human Rights Center Viasna.
2. Facts to which the Human Rights Center Viasna reacted by helping the victims of torture to write complaints to the prosecution bodies.
3. Facts, which became known to the Human Rights Center Viasna from open sources (mass media, internet).

FACTS OF TORTURES THAT BECAME KNOWN TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER VIASNA IN 2004.

Beating of participants of the actions of protest against the rigged election and referendum of 17 October, 2004.

The actions were held in Kastrychnitskaia Square of Minsk on 18-25 October. Those days citizens of Belarus came to the square to express their disagreement with the

officially declared results of the election and the referendum that were held on 17 October. The aim of the referendum was to introduce changes to article 81 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus and give Aliaksandr Lukashenka the right to run for presidency as many times as he wanted. The results of the referendum were falsified in favor of Aliaksandr Lukashenka as well as the results of the election (no representatives of opposition were "elected" to the Parliament). The actions of protest were peaceful. Nevertheless, AMAP (riot squads) stopped them with the use of violence and special means. More than 60 participants were detained. The majority of them were punished upon article 167.1 of the Code of Administrative Violations of the Republic of Belarus (violation of the order of holding and organization of mass measures). They were sentenced to 3-15 days of arrest or fined 20-70 basic units.

The organs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs also brought a criminal case upon article 342 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus (organization or active participation in the group actions that grossly violate public order).

Human Rights Center "Viasna" found out that AMAP used tortures towards the persons who were detained during the protest actions of 19-25 October against the rigged election and referendum. Several dozens people, including journalists and leaders of parties, were beaten.

According to the action participant Jaraslau Navumienka detained on October 19, in the police buses the rally participants were "knocked down on the floor and beaten". Iaraslau Navumienka stated that during the trial but Leninski borough court Judge Tsierashkova paid no attention to the fact of torture and sentenced him to 3 days of jail. Another participant detained at the rally, a student of one of Minsk universities, stated in court that they were knocked down on the bus floor and "trampled under police feet". But judges did not show interest to this fact. Lawyer of the Human Rights Center Viasna Valiantsin Stefanovich who appeared in court as a representative of the detained pointed out that the judges often refused to summon witnesses.

Beating of the head of the United Civil Party

Anatol Liabezka on 19 October 2004

Chairperson of the United Civic Party Anatol Liabiedzka received a severe craniocerebral injury and was taken to hospital with rib fractures and kidney haematoma. The riot squad policemen overtook Liabedzka on the front steps of Patio-Pizza restaurant, knocked him down and started to make blows with their boots on the head and face. "They beat me till I lost my consciousness, — says Liabedzka, — a group of 7-8 people

headed by Commander of Minsk Riot Squad Colonel Padabied entered the restaurant from the back door. I was dragged on the floor, and then they held me up by my arms so that I hung in the air and Padabed smashed me in the face 6 or 7 times repeating: “you got yourself into a big mess!” Then I lost consciousness”. Leninski borough prose-cutor’s office received a complaint about the fact of Anatol Liabedzka’s beating. The prosecutor is examining the case. The staff of Leninski borough prosecutor’s office interrogated UCP vice-chairperson Aliak¬sandr Dabravolski, UCP press officer Katsiaryna Tkachenka, and UCP activist Antanina Kavaliova. A. Liabedzka also met with the prosecutor’s office investigator.

The prosecutor’s office refused to bring a criminal case against the illegal actions of the riot squad officers who beat Anatol Liabedzka on 19 October.

Beating of Dzmitry Chartkou

on 19 October 2004

Dzmitry Chartkou, detained during the action of October 19, was beaten during detention and conveyed to neurosurgery of Minsk regional clinical hospital, where he was diagnosed with “injuries of soft tissues of the head and extremities”. He applied to the Human Rights Center Viasna and sent a complaint to Minsk Leninski borough prosecutor’s office. The complaint says: “On October 19, 2004 I was detained by police officers near Kastrychnitskaia Square in Minsk for alleged violation of Article 167-1 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Belarus. During detention the police officers used physical force against me manifested in blows in the head and body. I did not show any resistance to police officers. I obeyed immediately and was ready to walk to the bus with the detained myself. During my detention I was subject to beating and torture. As the result of beating I was taken to neurosurgery department of Minsk regional clinical hospital, where he was diagnosed with injuries of soft tissues of the head and extremities. I was in hospital from 20 October to October 25, 2004. I had to stay in hospital because of bad state of health after the beating. The beating continued after detention and when I was thrown in the bus, where the police took the other detained and continued the beating. According to article 18 of the Law “On Police”, police officers are obliged to attempt to inflict the least possible damage to health, honor, and dignity of the citizens. In this case the actions of police officers were obviously unlawful, continued after I was detained and caused physical and mental suffering to me”.

In his complaint Dzmitry Chartkou asks to identify persons who committed torture – “the persons who detained me are possibly named in the police reports attached to the

case of administrative detention". Besides that, he asks to carry out an examination of the aforementioned facts, send him for forensic medical examination, to institute criminal proceedings and to bring the guilty to account.

Leninski borough prosecutor's office is examining the facts.

Beating of journalists

on 19 October 2004

On October 19 actions several reporters were beaten. One of them, RFE/RL reporter Iury Svirko addressed Belarusian Procurator General Viktar Sheiman with a complaint. Iury Svirko wrote: "Several reporters of the Belarusian and foreign mass media were beaten by police during dispersal of a street rally in the center of Minsk in the evening of October 19". Iury Svirko reports that cameramen of Russian TV channels NTV and REN-TV Kanstantsin Marozau and Uladzimir Kostsin were beaten by riot squad officers at the moment when they tried to record detention of United Civil Party chairperson Anatol Labedzka. Their video-cameras were broken. Press photographer of the Associated Press agency Siarhei Hryts was illegally arrested. Iury Svirko suffered from a "member of the President's Security Service". In his complaint Iury Svirko demands to institute criminal proceedings under Article "illegal counteraction to reporter's work".

The prosecutor's office refused to bring a criminal case concerning the illegal actions of the riot squad who beat the journalists on 19 October.

Beating of Dzmitry Barodka

on 20 October 2004

The participant of the actions of protest against the rigged election and referendum gave the following information to Human Rights Center "Viasna":

"— I, Dzmitry Barodka, was beaten by the special police forces of Minsk after the detention on 20 October 2004. I was thrown into a bus with policemen and several people started to beat me. They kicked me in the face and in the kidneys and tore my jacked in several places. In several minutes they calmed down. Then my mobile phone rang and I started talking on it. They burst on me again. They threw me onto the floor, twisted my arms and took the telephone away. Someone stepped on my head. I received several hits on the back. After this they didn't allow me to rise and sit down. I spent about quarter of an hour on the floor. Then they allowed me to stand up."

Beating of Marharyta Antsileuskaia

on 4 October 2004

The activist of Zubr youth movement Marharyta Antsileuskaia was detained for distribution of the independent press in Minsk near Uskhod subway station. When Marharyta Antsileuskaia was detained she was beaten by head of juvenile inspectorate of Zavadzki borough Board of Internal Affairs Uladzimir Novikau. He handcuffed her to the car and beat her with a rubber truncheon.

Marharyta Antsileuskaia filed a complaint to Leninski borough prosecutor's office against the unlawful actions of police officers.

We should point out that this is the second case Uladzimir Novikaw got in the center of attention of human rights organizations as a person who participated in tortures.

In April 2001 Uladzimir Novikau appeared in the appeals to institute criminal proceedings on the facts of beating the detained after the "Final Diagnosis" action. In 2001 Uladzimir Novikau, who worked in Partyzanski borough Board of Internal Affairs and was a lieutenant, beat Katsiaryna Shaban, 19. After the girl was beaten she was taken to hospital by an ambulance and diagnosed with brain concussion.

Beating Frantsishak Viachorka during

detention on September 1, 2004

On ***1 September*** 2004 the pupils of YIakub Kolas Belarusian Humani-tarian Lyceum together with activists of Belarusian Student Association and other youth organization organized a picket in Kastrychnitskaia Square of Minsk in support of education in Belarusian language and with the demands of guarantees to it from the side of the authorities. About 20 persons took part in this peaceful action, including minors. When the picket participants tried to unroll banners and posters with slogans, riot squad policemen in plain clothes began to detain them. Frantsishak Viachorka was one of the first to be pulled into a bus. The lawyer of Human Rights Center "Viasna" Valiantsin Stefanovich was pulled there after him and saw how the police tortured the boy.

Father of the victim, Valiantsin Viachorka, head of Belarusian People's Front, filed a complaint against the unlawful actions of police officers to Tsentralny prosecutor's office on 2 September 2, 2004. The complaint raised the point of the need for the prosecutor's check of the mentioned facts and bringing the guilty to account under the law. The complaint says: "On September 1, 2004 my son Frantsishak Viachorka, born in 1988, was detained at the exit of Kastrychnitskaia subway station near the Palace of Trade Unions at about 4.05 p.m. by AMAP (riot squad) officers in civil clothes and taken to Minsk

Tsentralny borough Board of Internal Affairs. While detaining my son, the police officers failed to introduce themselves and to explain the reasons for their actions. My son learned that he had been detained by police officers only after they arrived to Tsentralny borough Board of Internal Affairs. In the process of detention strangers in civil clothes used brute physical force against the minor, namely, they twisted his arms, hit him in the legs, and beat him while dragging to the bus. The bus had no identification of relation to the bodies of internal affairs. In the bus they continued to beat my son who was lying on the bus floor. During the detention my son's pants and shirt were damaged, further usage of the clothes is impossible. Valiantsin K. Stefanovich and Iawhen I. Afnahiel were also dragged to the bus. When the detained were conveyed to Minsk Tsentralny borough Board of Internal Affairs, the police officers did not draw up any reports and, having kept them for no more than 2 hours, released the detained. During the detention my son found out the last name of one of the policemen who detained him: Lipinski, member of the 8th platoon of riot squad police of Minsk city Board of Internal Affairs. Another riot squad member in red T-shirt, who participated in the detention, was called by a nickname Marazilnik (Freezer) by his colleagues. On the street and in the bus the persons who detained the minor used foul language and intimidated him. The police officers insulted and degraded my son. I should point out that my son was never given the reasons for detention. Also, the police officers did not draw up a report of the administrative detention thus violating Article 240 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Belarus. In violation of Article 240 of the Code of Administ¬rative Offences neither I nor my wife were informed about our son's location. I consider the actions of police officers towards my son unlawful, exceeding the official power of police officers and violating the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Police", the norms of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Belarus, and the legal rights of a child. The police officers had no legal grounds for usage of the physical force described in Article 19 of the Law "About Police".

The personal belongings of my son were seized illegally, without record of seizure. He did not resist and did not counteract. In view of the aforesaid, guided by Article 6 of the Law "On Police", and the Law "On Office of a Public Prosecutor", I request:

1. to carry out the prosecutor's check of the mentioned facts
2. to bring the guilty persons to account as provided by law;
3. in the process of the check to interrogate the witnesses of my son's illegal detention: Valiantsin K. Stefanovich and Iawhen I. Afnahiel"

Prosecutor's check of the fact has been carried out, resulting in refusal to institute proceedings. The prosecutor's response read: "the police officers acted within the bounds of their legal powers".

Facts of cruel treatment connected with Minsk events of 21 July 2004, mass protest actions against 10-year rule of Aliaksandr Lukashenka

On 21 July in Minsk mass protest actions took place. On that day 10 years passed since Aliaksandr Lukashenka came to power.

In the evening of 21 July youth began to gather in Iakub Kolas Square in the center of Minsk. In several minutes the riot squad started to push the action participants out of the square. Then the police ringed those who tried to organize procession along the pavement and detained them with the use of force and truncheons. More than 70 persons were detained. The police drove 20 people who were detained after the meeting 20 kilometers away from Minsk and left them in a forest. On the way the riot squad mocked at the detainees and beat them.

The majority of the persons, detained during the meeting of 21 July were administratively punished upon article 167.1 of the Code of Administrative Violations – fined or sentenced to 3-15 days of jail.

The facts of cruel treatment that are confirmed by the complaint of Siarhiei Kuniets

The complaint says: "On 21 July, 2004 I, Siarhiei Kuniets, was on my way back from the concert and the rally, sanctioned by Minsk City Executive Committee, which took place on Banhalor Square in Minsk. Together with my friends I was heading to the railway station in order to be there in time to get to Barysaw. At 9 p.m. I, together with other people, was suddenly detained in one of the yards by riot squad police officers who dragged us to the bus. The riot squad officers failed to explain the reasons for detention. Neither I, nor my friends had any posters, flags, or banners. We did not shout any slogans and did not violate the public order in any other way. When detained I was dragged to the bus. I saw several dozen young people already in the bus. My friends Uladzimir Lut, Viktoryia Vaitsiakhovich, and Iawhien Silich were among them. Riot squad police officers did not react to the demands to explain the reasons for detention, degraded us with foul language, and threatened to use physical force towards me and the other detained. Then the bus drove off in the unknown direction. In some time the riot squad officers rudely ordered all the detained to leave the bus. When everybody got off the bus turned around

and left. The same happened to the detainees who were in the second bus. As it turned out, the riot squad officers left me and the others on Mahiliow highway about 20 kilometers away from Minsk. I should point out that at no point did they explain to me the reasons for my detention. Also, they did not make a record of administra-tive detention violation Article 240 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Belarus. Also, contrary to Article 240 of the Code of Administrative Offences, they failed to inform my parents of the detention although I made repeated requests urging them to do so. Many of the detained were under-age. The riot squad officers insulted and degraded me. Also, I would like to stress that after being detained I was not taken to a police station for investigation but taken out of town and left there. I consider the actions of riot squad police officers unlawful, exceeding the official power of police officers and violating the Law of the Republic of Belarus “On Police”.

Siarhiei Kuniets appealed against the unlawful actions of police officers, he demanded to carry out an examination, and to bring the guilty to account.

Beating of Ruslan Kharkievich

on 21 July 2004

During the action Ruslan Kharkievich was beaten by the police. They squeezed his chest so severely, that Kharkievich was taken away in an ambulance. Later he was fined 20 basic values ($180) for parti¬cipation in the action.

During the action of 21 July in Minsk the police violently beat the acti¬vist of Zubr movement Mikhail Audzieieu, who was hospitalized as a result. On 22 July Awdzeyew was even operated on suspicion of splenic rupture, that didn’t confirm. Instead, the medics removed a large hae-matoma near the spleen, which appeared after a hard blow.

Beating of Dzmitry Kuchynski

on 29 June 2004

On 27 June 2004 Zmitser Kuchynski was detained by police officers in the area of Horky Park and taken to station of public order protection # 70 of Partyzanski Borough Board of Internal Affairs. He was reported of having violated Article 172 part 3 of the Code of Administrative Offen-ces “distribution of printed materials without publisher’s imprint”.

Dzmitry Kuchynski’s complaint reads: “The police officers failed to read to me my rights described in Article 247 of the Code of Administrative Offences, failed to inform my parents of my detention (I am under-age), tried to examine my personal belongings

without record of examination and record of seizure of printed materials. With their actions the police officers grossly violated the requirements of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Belarus. When I pointed out to the police officers that their actions were illegal police captain Ivan Aliaksandravich Zhebit gave me several blows in the head, as well as several blows in the body and legs. Aliaksandr Shelieh, who was present in the office of police station, witnessed the fact of police captain beating me. I consider the actions of police officers unlawful, exceeding the official powers and violating the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Police", the norms of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Belarus, and my legal rights. The police officers had no legal grounds to use physical force against me; I did not show any resistance to police officers".

Dzmitry Kuchynski asked for a prosecutor's check of the aforemen-tioned facts and to bring Captain Ivan Zhebit to account. The criminal proceedings were not instituted.

Beating of Maksim Hromau (under age)

on 25 May 2004

The complaint on the fact of Maksim Hromau's beating was filed with Minsk Savetski borough prosecutor's office. The prosecutor's office is examining the case.

Maksim Hromaw was detained at 2 a.m. in Minsk, at the intersection of Kazlow Street and Skaryna Avenue. In his complaint Maksim Hromau pointed at the following facts: "during my detention police officers acted very violently against me, manifested in numerous blows with hands and rubber truncheons. Police officers first gave me several blows with the truncheons in the arms, legs, and back, and then started to beat me in the head with hands. They had no ground to use physical force against me. I did not show resistance or disobedience to policemen, I did not try to run away. After that the police officers detained and took me to Minsk Savietski Borough Board of Internal Affairs. There they drew up a report of an administrative offence. From the report I found out the names of police officers who detained and beat me: H. Sovanau and V. Tarnapovich. They are both police officers of Minsk Savietski Borough Board of Internal Affairs. As a result of beating I had to turn to Minsk clinical hospital # 9 for medical aid on 26 May, 2004. The duty doctor examined me and diagnosed uncomplicated brain concussion, injuries of soft tissues of the head. I was recommended to get a consultation from a neuropathologist. I think that with their actions H. Sovanaw and V. Tarnapovich exceeded their official power of police officers, grossly violated the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Police", and damaged my health. According to Article 18 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On

Police", police shall use physical force and special tools only if it is impossible to execute official powers by other means. According to Article 19 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Police", police shall use physical force for prevention and discontinuan-ce of an offence, self-defence, overcoming of resistance to legal demands of police, if non-violent measures do not ensure execution of their duty. I have not committed any of above-mentioned or similar actions, in view of the above the police officers had absolutely no grounds to use physical force against me".

In his complaint Maksim Hromau asked for examination of the aforementioned facts and to bring criminal charges against police officers H. Sovanau and V. Tarnapovich.

Beating of Andrei Koziel

on 25 March 2004

On 25 March in Minsk there took place the action that was devoted to celebration of the 86th anniversary of the declaration of Belarusian People's Republic. In Freedom Square the police detained and beat the vice-head of Minsk city organization of United Civil Party Andrei Koziel.

In his testimony he wrote:

"I came to Freedom Square at about 4.50 p.m. About 40 people gathered there to celebrate the anniversary of Belarusian People's Republic. Closely-cropped people twisted my arms and led to a police bus. On the way one of them kicked me in the stomach several times. Having thrown me into the bus they began to beat me. They hit me in the face, kidneys, stomach, arms and hands. Everything was going on very violently. One of them repeated: "We killed people like you in Chechnya…". In some time they began to tear the Pahonia emblem and the ribbon of white-red-white flag off my coat with even more anger. After I talked to a journalist over a walkie-talkie, a man in plain clothes hit me and took it away. At 7.50 they let me go. It was hard for me to move and breeze."

On 26 March Andrei Koziel complained to Minsk Tsentralny Borough Prosecutor's Office. He attached to his complaint the results of medical examination that witnessed the beating.

THE RESULTS OF THE COMPLAINS

Minsk Leninski Borough Procurator's Office refused to bring criminal cases on the facts of beating of the leader of the United Civil Party Anatol Liabedzka, journalists and other citizens who were massacred on 19 October. The prosecutor's office didn't find any

corpus delicti in the actions of the riot squad that beat participants of the action of protest. None of the complaints filed concerning the events of 19-25 October were satisfied. Any criminal cases concerning other complaints, filed by the victims of tortures, mentioned in this report weren't initiated either.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the registered facts Human Rights Center Viasna states:

In the Republic of Belarus there are facts of tortures and other inhumane treatment.

Prosecutor's offices and other state organs don't give adequate evaluation of the cases of torture. They refuse to bring criminal cases on these facts.

The Republic of Belarus doesn't execute its undertakings upon the ratified "Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degra-ding Treatment or Punishment" of 10 December 1984.

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